

#51

\$4

RAZZORCAKE

We Do Our Part.

the
**UNDERGROUND
RAILROAD to
CANDYLAND**

**GYRA
SKULLS**

tiltWheel
Part II

**Whoa Oh
Records**

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Razorcake is a bonafide non-profit music magazine dedicated to supporting independent music culture. All donations, subscriptions, and orders directly from us—regardless of amount—have been essential components to our continued survival.

We're proud to announce that the *Razorcake* 50th issue anniversary and benefit on June 6th at the Nomad Art Compound was a triumph across the board. It felt more like a party than a show. Nothing dumb happened (no cops, no fights, no douchburgers), all five bands—Rumspringer, God Equals Genocide, It's Casual, Tiltwheel, and The Bananas—played their hearts out. Over fifty folks helped us plan, prepare, and run it. A set of ladies even made delicious custom cupcakes for the event with edible razors, the Tiltwheel pill, and banana shapes on top of the icing. It felt great. After all debts were settled, *Razorcake* walked away with \$1,200, which is phenomenal.

Three weeks later, due to a series of unfortunate events, a one-in-a-thousand shot, I've been told by our local computer expert, that the main "Razorcake brain" computer got spiked. We were one week from buying the equipment to prevent such a hamstringing and just wanted to finish the issue you're holding in your hands first before tearing apart our system, just in case something funky happened. Something seriously funky happened when all of the pieces were scattered. Damn it.

As I write this, the "brain" is still in the shop, yet due back soon, all of the equipment to prevent this situation from recurring has been purchased with the benefit money, and with some long days ahead, we'll be back in the saddle, right on schedule, chuggin' along. If I hadn't written about it here, you probably wouldn't have known.

If you would like to give *Razorcake* some longer-term, hands-on assistance, we're looking for volunteers in the following areas: non-profit grant writer, non-profit fundraiser, FileMaker Pro wizard, PC network specialist, and website coder (PHP-Nuke and Zen Cart). If you live in the L.A. area, we could always use a helping hand. Our door is open.

Contact us via www.razorcake.org if you'd like to help out.

Thank you.

—Todd Taylor

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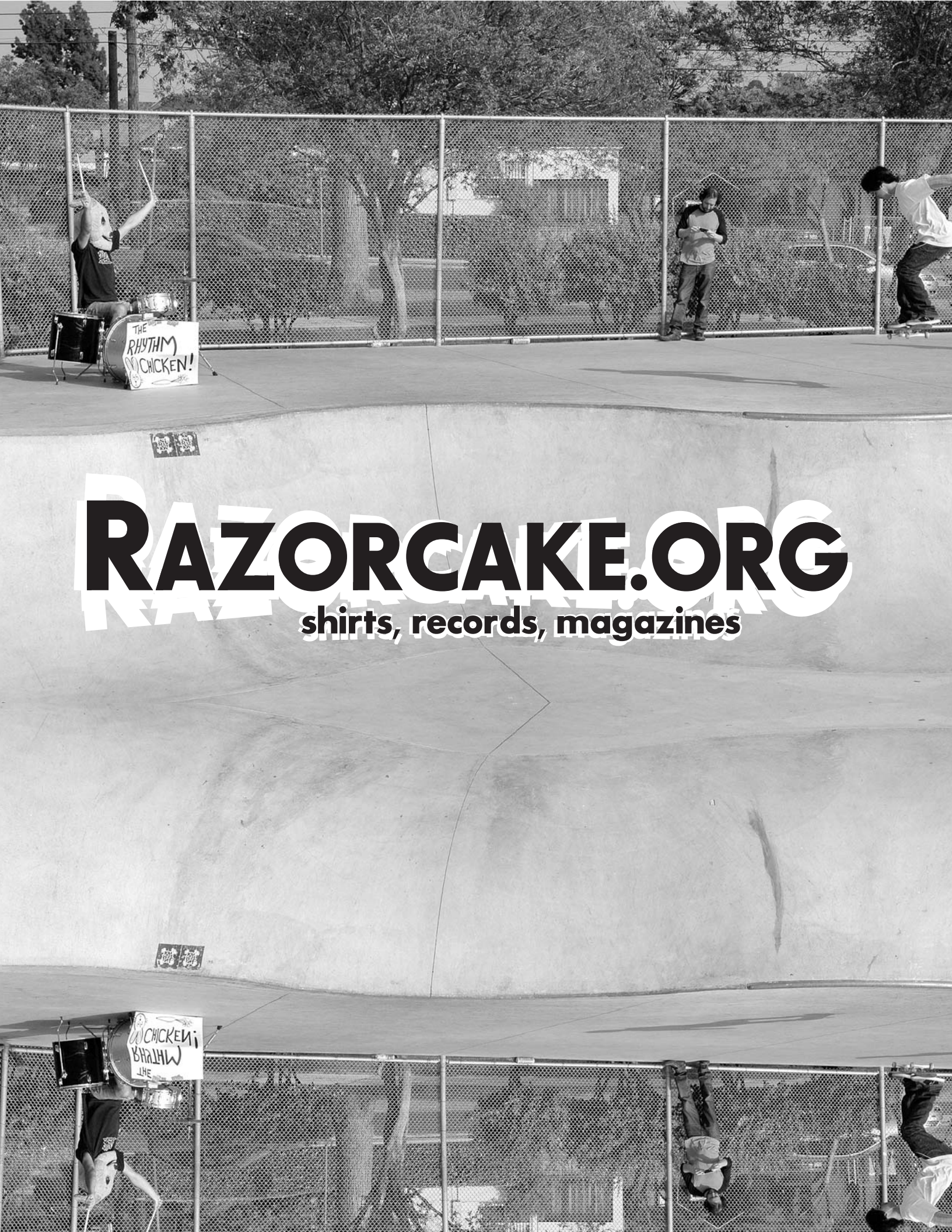
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Twenty Pounds

When the economy was booming, Razorcake wasn't. When the economy is failing, Razorcake isn't.

Say you go to the doctor. You're not feeling so great. The diagnosis is simple. You're unhealthy, a little overweight, tired all the time. Your body is a failing economy of health. The doctor's advice is mundane: exercise more regularly and watch what you eat. "Do it for an entire year, see how it goes," she says. You find an exercise that doesn't make you feel like a hamster, incorporate it into your weekly regimen. You remember enjoying bike rides. You start reading the labels of boxes, buying food that isn't even in boxes.

Over those twelve months, literally by each drop of sweat you produce, every donut you don't eat, the smallest continual progress is made. Day-to-day, it's not obvious because it's a balancing act. Man, you really love ice cream, but you're now able to conquer a hill without getting off the bike. Little, deliberate, self-disciplined steps overseen by a professional. It's for the long haul, one pedal rotation at a time. In the process you've swapped out some fat for muscle. Most of it's hidden underneath, but you're definitely stronger. As an added bonus, you've lost twenty pounds. More importantly, you feel better, clearer.

Say you're a gigantic corporate bank, car company, or insurance company. This isn't too far of a stretch. In America, corporations, in many ways, have the rights of humans. You're not feeling well. And due to two decades of overindulgence of fast food economics, of eating your own hubris by the truckload, you

go to a doctor. Due to the severity of your shambolic health, the diagnosis is grim and swift. "You've got to lose twenty pounds right now," the doctor recommends. Acting like there have been no medical advancements since the Civil War, the doctor applies a tourniquet, produces a bone saw, begins right below the pelvic bone, and doesn't stop until she's removed your entire right leg. You scream because anesthesia hasn't been invented. Your leg is across the room from you: floppy, lifeless, no longer a part of you. Blood's splattered everywhere. All is not lost—you're still alive, still the same person in your heart—but little new has been gained. You're still living on the foundation of ideas that induced your failure. You look on the bright side. You just lost twenty pounds.

That leg, removed, is what largely unchecked corporations stood on. It's what connected them to the ground so firmly. The laborers, the ones who make their living on their feet, who actually *made something*, have lost their jobs, retirements, 401(k)s, and their livelihood by the millions under that corporate watch. In response, the government gives those corporations sizeable checks while simultaneously placing more hurdles between laid-off workers and their unemployment benefits.

There has always been an economic dividing line and it's only getting wider.

In theory, Razorcake should be so very screwed, but we're not only hanging in, we're pedaling away up the steepest hill we've ever tried. With both legs. Sweating like mad from the effort.

Please, don't give up.

—Todd Taylor

AD / CONTRIBUTOR DEADLINES

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Cover artwork by Jason Willis
Cover photos by Shanty Cheryl

This issue is dedicated to the birth of Chelsea Adele Riddle

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"How much of birthing a new life means letting the old one die?" —Dead Mechanical, "Shitty Wedding" off of *Medium Noise*

THANK YOU: We have no idea how he did it, short of rubbing a unicorn's magical horn against something even more magical like a rainbow made out of orphans' tears of joy thanks to Jason Willis for the cover and Shanty Cheryl for the photos; Simple strokes thanks to Claire Cronin for her illo. in Liz O's column; Fish bones on top of garbage sacks of drugs thanks to Mitch Clem and Nation of Amanda for the illo. in Amy's column; You shoot one person and all of a sudden *The Man* won't let you produce any more records thanks to Ryan Gelatin for his illo. in Norb's column; El-kabonk! thanks to Craig Horky for his illo. in Dale's column; In direct homage to *The Brat's 12" EP*, Danny Martin left out Tom Morello's right arm below the shirt cuff thanks for his illo. in Nardwuar's column; Unlucky and charmless thanks to Matthew Merys for his illo. in Gary's column; Fuck, dude, you're actually asking people to read these things called... books? thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Circuit boards and bubblegum thanks to Joe Evans III and Jeff Fox for their interview and graphic design expertise with the *Whoa Oh* interview; GI Joe nemesis or the dudes who got their comeuppance from Ralph Macchio? thanks to Mr. Z, Jeff Evrard, and Albert Lam for their help with the *Cobra Skulls* interview; If you're in for a light-reading paragraph in this issue, may I recommend the Faye Fife vibrator story? thanks to Lauren Measure, Jeff Proctor, Shanty Cheryl, and Michael Cutter, for their help with the *Tiltwheel Part II* interview; Dinosaurs riding shotgun with Raggedy Ann on rollercoasters! Oh my! thanks to Amy Adoyzie, Shanty Cheryl, and Matt Army for their help with *The Underground Railroad To Candyland* interview; Thanking the "thank you list" people plus Steve Larder for his illos. for the *Razorcake Remembrances* piece. Without all these folks, Razorcake would be entirely different; "You are hurting the scene, Razorcake, by not liking my _____ (record, book, DVD, or zine). The scene rules because I rule." thanks to the following reviewers: Josh Benke, Ryan Leach, Jessica T., Sarah Shay, Andrew Flanagan, Jake Shut, N.L. Dewart, Evan Katz, Billups Allen, Kurt Morris, Bryan Static, Jeff Proctor, Joe Evans III, Vincent, CT Terry, Reyan Ali, Ronnie Riggat, Rene Navarro, Sean Koepenick, Dondondon...dnt...adon, MP Johnson, Art Ettinger, Matt Average, Keith Rosson, Jimmy Alvarado, Juan Espinosa, Lord Kveldulfr, Jennifer Federico, Noah Kaplan, Speedway Randy, Kristen K., Ollie, Aphid Peewit, and Lauren Trout; Whoa, man, lots of people are coming, helping out, and/or are being inducted into the exciting world of data entry, and we thank 'em: N.L. Dewart, Megan Pants, Matt Braun, Chris Baxter, Jeff Fox, Kari Hamanaka, Adrian Chi, Vincent, Chris Devlin, Adrian Salas, Ever, Samantha, Joe Dana, Jessica T., Brendan Cosgrove, TK, Juan Espinosa, and Willie Gussin. A special "happy holidays!" thanks to Mary Clare Stevens. *Cobra*— Here's to future absurdity with no Ripper time!



From the cradle to gradeschool. Our longtime readers may remember Henry from the first several editorial pages. He was born right when *Razorcake* started.

JERRY! JERRY! JERRY! JERRY!



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"The process of traveling has changed drastically, and it's a pain in the ass."

Fun at the Airport

Throughout my unfortunately limited experience as a traveler, I've developed an image of airports as bustling, miniature cities. People glide down motorized sidewalks, past glittering duty free shops, sleek bars, and massive security complexes. Long Beach Airport has none of these things. Instead, it consists of one flat-roofed building split into a few terminals with one modest newsstand/giftshop, one snack stand, and a small aviation museum running through the halls.

Long Beach Airport is a flashback to a time of mid-century modernism. Standing in front of it, you can imagine people arriving in their suits and pencil skirts, unloading stacks of matching luggage. In reality, though, the scene isn't terribly different from any other airport: a mess of harried people in sweats trying to get from L.A. to, typically, either San Francisco or Las Vegas with a weekend's worth of clothing crammed into one beat-up carry-on piece of luggage.

It is an exceptionally small airport, smaller than Burbank or Midway in Chicago. But when you're running through the terminal practically barefoot, your belongings dangling dangerously from your person, Long Beach Airport feels as massively overwhelming as even the greatest of international hubs.

Carlos and I were heading to San Francisco on this particular Thursday morning, ready to see Throbbing Gristle play later in the evening. We arrived at the airport before either one of us was quite awake, somewhere in the neighborhood of 7:30 AM, because even if this entire airport is smaller than one terminal at LAX, we still have to anticipate spending an hour in line getting our bags checked. Two hours should give us enough time, right?

The first time I flew was back in 1998, when I went to New York City for a school-related trip. I can't remember any packing restrictions, any concern that our bags might not get through the check. In fact, I think our only worry back then was if we packed warm enough clothing for New York in November (for the record, we didn't). But, the process of traveling has changed drastically since then and, quite frankly, it's a pain in the ass. The night before, I thought not about what was actually needed for San

Francisco, but what I could or couldn't get on the plane. Rule number one: Make sure that there are no lighters in your handbag or carry-on (I learned this the hard way going to Las Vegas a few years ago). Rule number two: Don't even bother with toiletries, unless they are tiny and in a zip-lock bag (as I learned on the same flight to Vegas, clear make-up bags do not count). Rule number three: I don't know what TSA's policy is on razors, but it's best not to even try it. You can get some disposable ones at the hotel.

Even then, I ended up checking a bag, mostly to enjoy the fact that, in April on Jet Blue, that luxury was still free.

We were there an hour-and-a-half before the flight was scheduled to depart. But things always change and, as we learned on this sojourn, morning flights to and from San Francisco are inevitably delayed due to what airline employees call a "low ceiling," which, as you may have guessed, means fog. By 7:45 AM, we learned that we were stuck at an airport with little in the way of bars or restaurants for nearly three hours.

I could have sworn I heard a loudspeaker grumble something with the word "evacuate" in it. But Long Beach Airport's loudspeakers are as fuzzy and feedback-riddled as the ones used on the playground of my elementary school back in the 1980s. Carlos was still sitting on the bench sipping his tea, so it must have been a weird trick of my mind, maybe some subconscious fear that something had to go wrong manifesting itself in distorted voices.

Then hordes of people, more than I had thought could be inside the airport, slowly exited towards the parking lot, moving like a tense cloud in between cars. A lady approached us, saying that we needed to leave, "evacuate," and follow the crowd.

"What's going on?" I asked.

She didn't know for certain.

We ventured into the parking lot, pressed up against a wall of people and luggage. It was not the panic-stricken mess that one might imagine. Most of the faces surrounding us bore looks that mixed confusion with annoyance. Confusion as to why we had just been evacuated from an airport so small that it was unknown to many people who live amidst the sprawl of

greater Los Angeles. Annoyance because now all of our flights would be delayed further.

There were people on their cell phones explaining why they would be late returning home, why they might miss the meetings they had scheduled later in the day. There were people checking websites on itty-bitty screens to see if this had made the news (apparently, it hadn't). There were people on Twitter, relaying 140-character descriptions of what was transpiring.

I thought that maybe I should start tweeting. After all, the news is my job. But then a wave of either panic or good sense came over me. My Twitter feed is synced to my Facebook account, where I am connected to two siblings and at least four cousins, some of whom are known for relaying information faster than the time it takes to re-tweet a message. And there was one person I didn't want finding out about this debacle. My mother.

By the standard of suburban moms, mine always seemed pretty cool. When we were small, she never freaked out about us coming into the path of germs or roughhousing. As we grew older, she didn't make too much of a fuss about loud music, weird clothes, or coming home from clubs at 5 AM. But I know her well enough to realize that if the words "evacuate" and "airport" are used in the same sentence, her mind will immediately conjure up images of terrorist attacks and she will panic.

"I just hope this doesn't end up on the news," I muttered to Carlos.

In between the clusters of crowd were security guards, all of whom were surrounded by the nosiest of people. Since I was wearing my tweed reporter's hat, it seemed fitting to join in the Q&A session. Overall, the questions were identical. "What happened?" and "When are we going to be allowed on the planes?" Hearsay and speculation peppered all of the answers. Somebody found something suspicious. It might have been in a piece of luggage. It might have been laying about one of the terminals. The item could have resembled a pipe bomb. There might have been something with fertilizer on it. Whatever it was, though, this was just a precautionary move, we were told. Do not be alarmed, we were reminded. Yeah, because there is never any need to worry when someone has



In the end, my reporting skills resulted only in discerning that no one knew a damn thing.

“something resembling a pipe bomb.” In the end, my reporting skills resulted only in discerning that no one knew a damn thing.

It’s hard to say how long we were trapped in the parking lot. When you’re surrounded by crowds and filled with a lower backache that comes from standing for too long, a half hour can seem like an entire day. At some point, though, we were told that the threat was over, that we were allowed back into the building.

There was a mad rush back to the building, lines as long as anything you could see at a big city, international airport. We waited outside, just against the end of the line, watching a bevy of people in uniform talk to an ordinary looking gentleman.

“That has to be him,” Carlos and I muttered to each other. We continued watching in fascination, occasionally bouncing ideas off of each other as to what in this man’s luggage might have triggered an evacuation, each item more ridiculous than the last. We surmised, though, that it was probably some sort of medical device or substance that older people would have to take on a trip. We shook our head, all the while mumbling, “Poor guy.”

In the time that we spent spying, we missed the first call for our flight. By the time we moved up enough in the line to have our IDs checked, our names were butchered over the loudspeaker.

“Is that supposed to be my name?”

“Oh, shit, what did we do?”

If you could hear hearts and stomachs dropping, there would have been a thud at that moment. It’s quite possible that I began

hyperventilating while wondering what the hell could we have done in our relatively inoffensive lives to have our names called out over a loudspeaker maybe fifteen minutes after the airport was evacuated.

“Your plane is now boarding.”

Relief only settled for a second before I started screaming, “Oh, shit. The plane is going to leave without us.”

Meanwhile, we were stuck in a line that was inching through security. We took off our shoes, hats, and any accessories, stuck them in plastic, open-top containers while we were still ten people back. I took my laptop out of my bag and put them into a separate container.

“Take off your jacket too,” a woman said gruffly as I approached her.

Carlos was already through the checkpoint and on the way to the plane when someone barreled, “Whose laptop is this?”

“Mine,” I answered.

“Laptop and bag have to be in separate trays.”

Funny, I could have sworn that I never had to do that before.

“We need to run this again.”

“But, but,” I panted. “My plane. It’s leaving. They’re calling my name and my boyfriend is already on it.”

A man with a much kinder disposition looked at me from across the conveyor.

“Don’t worry,” he said. “They aren’t going to leave without you.”

“Sure?”

“Yes.”

It took an additional two minutes to rerun my things through the check and then make sure that my MacBook didn’t get mixed up with the one belonging to the guy behind me (do people ever accidentally swap computers in this mess?). I threw on my jacket, scarf, and hat. Shoved my bracelets into my handbag, slid the laptop into its bag and nearly bolted off before I remembered something.

“Shoes!”

And by shoes, I mean a seventeen-year-old pair of ten-eye Doc Martens with laces that are rattled beyond belief.

If I only I had been able to fit these shoes into my suitcase.

I grabbed the pair with my ticket-holding hand and ran through the waiting area, ready to knock over whole families while looking for my plane. I barely paused upon seeing the gatekeeper and waved the shoes with a ticket stuck between them.

“This is the SFO flight, right?”

“Yes.”

“Good.”

I felt the slap of sock-covered feet against cement and asphalt as I raced toward an old metal staircase leading to the plane.

“Hey,” I gasped to Carlos.

“What happened?”

I grumbled something about laptops and why do people keep changing the rules as I sat down.

Carlos looked towards the floor.

“Why aren’t you wearing shoes?”

—Liz Ohanesian



“Few things are kookier than the ideology of a fixed-income Arizona desert conservative.”

In Praise of Shitty Museums

On December 23, 1944, twenty-six determined prisoners quietly slipped into a 178-foot tunnel they dug, emerged in a canal outside the walls of the POW camp, and embarked on a desperate dash for the border.

It sounds like a daring escape out of occupied Europe or, at the very least, a thrilling scene in a Hollywood blockbuster. But would you be surprised to learn that this great escape took place on American soil, the escapees were German POWs, and the camp in question was located in what is today ultra-affluent Scottsdale, Arizona?

You would be indeed. So on a recent visit to Arizona, you leap at the chance to learn more about the “Great Escape” at the Arizona Military Museum located at the Papago Military Reservation on McDowell Road in the northern part of Papago Park. The park sits in the shadow of extraordinary-looking mountains that look nothing like the rest of the geological formations in the Valley of the Sun: massive, boulder-shaped piles of arkosic, conglomerate sandstone riddled with smooth depressions that are millions of years old. It looks like a dinosaur squatted over Scottsdale and pinched a big red loaf, which wouldn’t be a bad idea.

In 1879, the U.S. government granted the land to the Pima and Maricopa Indians, but took it back in 1930 (now you know where “Indian giving” comes from) and parceled it out to Phoenix, Tempe, and the Arizona National Guard. Today, the Military Reservation sits at the northern edge of Papago Park on the western side of the mountains. Back in 1943, the camp was located on the eastern side. Close enough for government work.

To get to the museum, you have to go through a gate and show your driver’s license to the armed guard. Of course, they don’t tell you any of this on the museum’s website or on their recorded message. If you happen to call when they’re open—a brief four-hour window from noon to four on Saturday and Sunday, except during the summer when they don’t open at all—chances are fifty-fifty that the kid who answers the phone won’t know what side of McDowell the museum is on and will send you on a wild goose chase. (Or is that “goosestepper” chase?) After driving around for half an hour, you finally figure out where to go and make your way inside the reservation. You suspect it was easier to escape from Papago Park than it is to visit.

The museum is housed in the Old Arsenal Building, a large adobe structure that was

built in 1936 as part of a USA Work Program and was used as a maintenance shop for the German POWs. Today, the museum shares the Old Arsenal with the Arizona Regional Training Institute. To get there, you cross a dry and dusty parade ground and enter the building through huge reinforced wooden doors. It’s a nice touch. You feel as if you could be entering an old bunker dating back to when Arizona was still a territory, but it all goes downhill from there.

To say that the museum is a disappointment is an understatement. The main hall is dominated by rows of glass display cases dedicated to various Arizona-specific armed conflicts throughout the ages, from the Conquistadors to the present day. The presentation is generally shoddy. The uniforms are dusty, the glass streaked with fingerprints, and the plaques faded and hard to read. The mannequins are department store jobs that lean against the compartment’s walls or tilt against the glass. They look like dolls that have been left on the shelf too long and have begun to topple over. In the case dedicated to the uniforms of the North Vietnamese, they used a female mannequin, which seems strangely disrespectful to both the North Vietnamese and to female combatants. It also makes the NVC look kinda hot in those black pajamas. If you get aroused at inappropriate moments the next time you watch *Platoon*, you’ll have the Arizona Military Museum to thank for it.

The Great Escape exhibit is housed in its own room off the main hall. The story of the Great Escape is explained via a photocopy of a newspaper article from the *Arizona Daily Sun* published a dozen years ago and posted at knee level so you have to crouch to read it. The biggest feature is a model of the camp with little replica barracks, replica guard towers, the whole camp in replica. It shows where the Germans dug the hole behind the bathhouse and how the exit point was mid-way between two guard towers. There are even little figurines of POWs escaping. Go, little Nazis, go! Although it’s cool to look at, it feels amateurish. The fact that its dimensions are the same size as a ping-pong table adds to the feeling that it belongs in the basement of your kooky uncle who never got over his fascination of model railroad sets and role playing games.

This is a shame. The story of the Great Escape deserves more because it’s a remarkable story. By now, most Americans know that during WWII the U.S. government interred thousands of its citizens in camps

simply because they were Japanese. But most people don’t know that there were hundreds of camps set up in the states to house prisoners of war. Papago Park was where they sent the *unterseebootwaffe*—sailors who served aboard German u-boats. Reflect for a moment on the perverse logic involved in the decision to send a bunch of pale submariners, who seldom saw the light of the day, to the Arizona desert. Perhaps the military does have a sense of humor after all.

Until the late stages of the war, the u-boat force was the pride of the *Kriegsmarine*. Only the best and brightest German naval officers and sailors were considered for u-boat duty and it was an honor to be selected. In other words, these men weren’t stupid. Sending them to a camp just 130 miles from the Mexican border was daring them to escape.

Like most of their countrymen, the German sailors had probably read the work of Karl May, a conman turned novelist who cranked out a series of novels set in the American West while serving a stint in prison for forgery. The books chronicle the adventures of Old Shatterhand, a German émigré who befriends Chief Winnetou, an Apache savage so noble he makes Hiawatha look like Chaka from *Land of the Lost*. Improbably, May’s novels were read and admired from everyone from Albert Schweitzer to Adolf Hitler. (Even more improbably, they are still read today.) So, when the officers went looking for sailors who were willing to chance a dangerous desert crossing, there was no shortage of volunteers.

It was the greatest escape of its kind on American soil, but it didn’t last. The Germans were dispirited when they realized that the Salt River was actually a dried-up wash and many gave themselves up. One hardy POW, inspired no doubt by Old Shatterhand, spent thirty-five days in a cave before he was picked up in downtown Phoenix asking directions for the border in heavily accented English.

There are a lot of story lines surrounding the Great Escape. Unfortunately, the museum does a really shitty job of telling them. You wander off to see what else the museum has to offer. In a large, dimly lit room off the Great Escape exhibit sits a disabled UH-1M Army Combat Helicopter. Stripped of weapons, its paint faded and streaked with dust, it looks like a piece of junk. It is not the central figure of a diorama. There’s no scenery in the backdrop. There are no mannequins in the cockpit. It’s just there. There are a few ammo boxes scattered about and naked, half-formed mannequins are piled in the corner,

eerily corpse-like. If the Great Escape exhibit was reminiscent of a basement, this one is the garage, the place where the important junk goes. If there's a better definition of a museum, you can't think of one.

Up the stairs is the coup de grace: an exhibit dedicated to the War on Terror. The display case takes up an entire wall and is plastered with newspaper clippings from the last eight years: 9/11, the Invasion of Iraq, suicide bombers in Afghanistan, etc. On one side is an American GI in desert fatigues, on the other side is a mannequin decked out in jeans, Chuck Taylors (you know, because they walk among us), a T-shirt from the Olympic games in Atlanta (oh, the irony), cheap sunglasses, a checkered head scarf, and an RPG launcher. For a brief second, you feel like you're at the Al Qaeda Macy's. You can't decide if it's terrible or merely terrifying.

Actually, it's kind of awesome. It dawns on you that, like movies and theme parks, museums are in the suspension of disbelief business. As anyone who has sweated over a paper-mâché volcano or a shoebox diorama knows, the function of a display is to set the scene for a plausible story. Zoos are really good at this: if the animal's enclosure isn't in sync with its natural habitat, guests will see zoos for what they really are: animal POW camps.

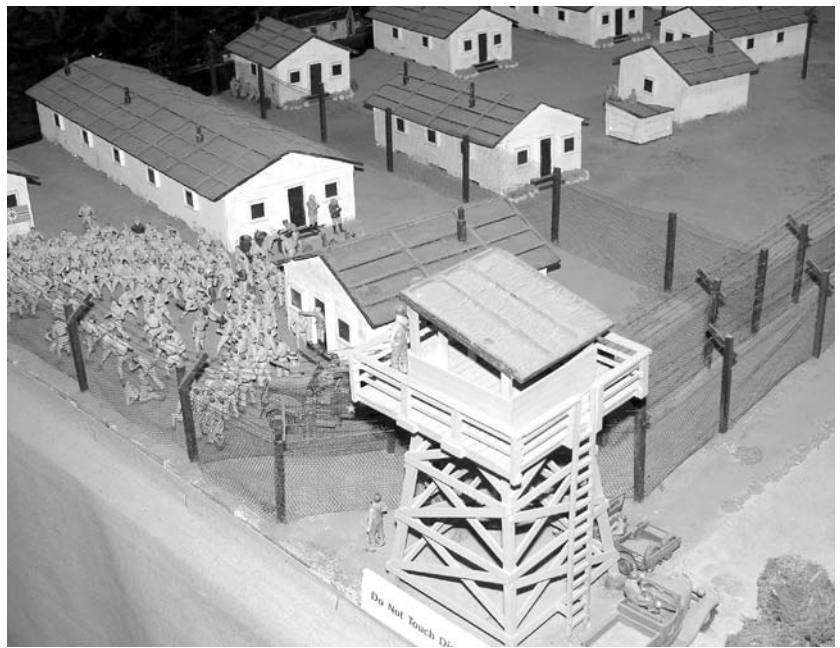
For a brief
second, you
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you're at
the Al Qaeda
Macy's.

Museums fail when they forget the exhibits' primary function: to tell a story. Guests need a context to understand what they are looking at. The networks understand this. Before they show a Chinese gymnast doing a floor routine or a bulldozer tearing down a house, they provide a back story so that the viewer can put the events they're witnessing into context. If there's no context, there's no story, and if there's no story, there's no suspension of disbelief, and without suspension of disbelief, the ideology is laid bare. And there are few things kookier than the ideology of a fixed-income Arizona desert conservative: a mixture of classism, militarism, racism, and xenophobia.

You resolve to leave as quickly as possible and exit the shitty museum. The parade ground feels like the cold side of the sun. It's even hotter in the car. You don't wait for the air conditioning to kick in. You get the fuck out. As you put some distance between you and the big red turd that is Papago Park, you realize those Nazi sailors had the right idea after all.

Author's Note: If you'd like to learn more about the Great Escape from Papago Park, check out John Hammond Moore's book The Faustball Tunnel, which, inexplicably, is NOT for sale at the Arizona Military Museum.

—Jim Ruland





"Sometimes, we organize a rally, but it becomes more of a march, and then it becomes a riot."

Top Six Most Bizarre Protests I've Heard of Recently!

Attention all punks! Attention all people who are against something! Attention all people who are for it!

In these trying years, people are desperate for solutions! For change! For even more change! I know what you're thinking. How can I best capitalize on this present-day uncertainty to convince the public to add a pink Converse shoe marshmallow to the Lucky Charms' lineup? Indeed. And yet, this is not the only pressing issue for the "Yes I Can" generation. There's also the need to institute a national shame-based approach toward people who don't dance when listening to Teenage Bottlerocket. And to prosecute Ben Weasel for converting to Catholicism!

Sadly, the death of our nation's most prominent protest lyricist, Joey Ramone ("I don't like playing ping pong/I don't like the Viet Cong"), has sapped the inspiration from many a weary activist. Entrenched in the same old tactics, we organize marches, rallies, protests, and riots. Sometimes, we organize a rally, but it becomes more of a march, and then it becomes a riot. This is about as exciting as it gets, which is to say, boring.

But it doesn't have to be this way! Several brave individuals have paved the way, inventing new forms of protest to call attention to their painstakingly specific political beliefs! And no, I am NOT talking about any of the following: puppets, Black Bloc (Question: Why do anarchists choose to spell it without the "k?"), "street theater," flash mobs, or more puppets.

No! *Razorcake* doesn't write about the same old topics! This is a cutting-edge magazine! We were the ones who broke the story about the connection between DFO (Dillinger Four Obsession) and TWO (Tiltwheel Obsession)! We allow a drum-playing chicken wearing a bunny costume to write a column for us! We don't even have a letters section for you to argue that your band actually IS really good and that, had your record only been assigned to a

reviewer who specializes in crappy Polish crust hip hop, it would have gotten the attention it deserved!

So, take that bandana off your face and resurrect yourself from your "die-in!" It's time for the Top Six Most Bizarre Protests I've Heard of Recently! Prepare to be inspired!

1.) When Dan Glass got upset about a proposal to add a third runway at London's Heathrow airport, he didn't make a sign saying, "Two is Enough! Fuck the System!" and go stand by an intersection waiting for someone to give him the finger. No, he decided to shake the prime minister's hand, but only after he had dipped his fist in super glue. "I've just superglued myself to your arm," Glass told prime minister Gordon Brown. "Don't panic. This is a non-violent protest."

Sadly, before Glass could go into his anti-plane manifesto, Brown was able to wrest himself free from Glass's sticky embrace. Estimated total time of glue-based protest? Twenty seconds. Estimated publicity for Glass' cause? More than twenty seconds. Estimated ridiculousness of his tactics? High, quite high! The only downside of this protest method? Well, according to Glass, "It really hurt." But what's a little pain for the good of many? (Answer: pain.) So, go ahead and stick yourself to the man! Only this time, use stronger glue.

2.) We all make choices. For some of us, our choice is to put on a threadbare Crass T-shirt and head down to the local anti-war protest. Good enough, but awfully unimaginative compared to a group of British climate change activists.

Last year, members of the group dressed up in fluorescent jackets to impersonate railroad workers. As a train carrying coal to Britain's largest power plant approached, the activists, having memorized railway emergency procedures, provided signals alerting the train to stop. Since most conductors do

not run an "Is this a real emergency or just a bizarre political protest?" check prior to responding to a crisis, the train came to a speedy halt. The protestors then shoveled out the coal and set up camp inside the train cars. They had brought food, water, blankets, a portable toilet—even masks to use as a safety precaution while dumping the coal.

It took the police hours and hours to end the protest, during which time a woman came aboard dressed as a canary (you know, canary in a coal mine), and a banner proclaiming "Leave it in the Ground" was unfurled. Think about it. Doesn't this make your average protest seem pathetic?

3.) As many bumper stickers have told me, all politics is local. (Except, of course, when it isn't). And nothing pisses people off worse than potholes. So, when residents of a small Saskatchewan town realized that their roads were getting a bit too bumpy, did they spend all their time petitioning the government for assistance? No! Think about it. You're a tiny town. No one cares if you have potholes. Deal with it.

So, the locals embarked on the only logical course of action: They posed naked in front of potholes and turned this display of outrage into a calendar. And while it may be easy to ignore a bunch of Canadian whiners, it is quite difficult to ignore a bunch of naked people standing next to potholes. So the plan worked and the roads were repaired! (However, please note that the nudity thing seems to work best in super local situations. PETA keeps having celebrities take off their clothes to save animals and I ate a chicken sandwich yesterday—clear proof that their approach has failed.)

4.) Sometimes getting arrested for protesting is unavoidable. Sometimes, even when you're trying really hard to avoid it, it still happens. And we all know people who proudly announce how many times they've been in jail for protesting. Of course, what really matters are two things: 1.) Were they successful in what



While it may be easy to ignore
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standing next to potholes.

they tried to do? And, if not, then 2.) Were they able to write the equivalent of "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" while being fed non-vegan food?

If neither of these applies, then perhaps it's best to make your point while avoiding arrest. In South Korea, a country apparently full of people who do nothing other than plan bizarre protests, it's illegal to burn a foreign flag. Okay, seems like a pretty standard (read: pointless) rule. But do you really want to spend time in prison for burning some fabric? (No.) But do you really want to destroy the evil Japanese flag? (Yes.) The problem is, traditional laws appear to forbid ANY kind of destruction of nationalist cloth. Except, as in most cases, the politicians forgot something. And the protestors realized it. Which is to say, the protestors started eating Japanese flags. Take that, island-dwelling imperialists! If you can handle the gastro-intestinal side effects,

this may be the protest for you! (Possible follow-up protest: photograph your flag-ridden feces.)

5.) Okay, it was impossible to include only one South Korean protest on this list. So, allow me to introduce you to Ahn Sang-gyu, who held a protest three years ago, during which he did the only logical thing anyone could think of to protest Japan's territorial claim to a 187,000 square meter grouping of rocks in the Sea of Japan. Ahn covered himself with 187,000 bees. See, sometimes the answer is just so obvious!

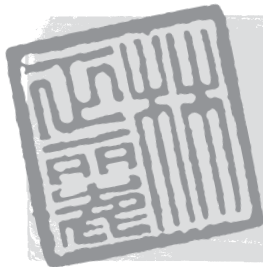
6.) The "Bore Them with Science" approach! In 2003, German students protested funding cuts. Does that sound boring? Yes. How about this: German students held a seventy-two hour physics lecture in a makeshift tent outside several embassies, to protest the funding cuts. Better, much better!

Oddly enough, people actually showed up. "When I lectured on laser optics at 3 a.m., all seats were taken with dozens of students listening from outside even though it was freezing," one professor said. How were the protesters able to ensure such a large crowd? Simple! While protesting budget cuts, you should also attempt to beat the world record for the longest-non-stop academic lecture! It's like watching someone set the world record for eating the most pie in fifteen minutes. You can't NOT be there!

Hopefully these methods have inspired you to refine your protest tactics! I expect to see all of you out on the streets, your mouths full of half-chewed flags, your arms covered in glue, your nude legs covered in bees, and your ears attuned to the finer points of particle physics!

The End!

—Maddy



MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

**“Objective:
Get money.
Get paid.”**

Rezoom

A convergence of greed, debt and, consumerism—hallmarks of modern-day Americana—has exploded in our collective red, white, and blue faces. The economy and us, we’re on a break. Our honeymoon—that flourishing period of my young adult life where jobs were to be had and money was made to be spent (not saved)—was gorgeous and felt right. The economy felt invincible. So did we. We were in love with one another; we indiscriminately lavished it with our ever-increasing expendable income and it gave us a living wage and encouragement to incur debt. Dang, it was to be.

Until it wasn’t.

Until we realized that the economy is a cruel mistress, that she was being bedded by irresponsible home mortgage lenders. We broke up, and it hasn’t been easy. The economy wants all its stuff back, like all that money it lent you. Or worse yet, it took all the friends you made together, like your job.

This is what I’m coming home to face: a poor analogy for the collapsed economy. I am conflicted because I am both ecstatic and anxiety-ridden about my return.

Ultimately, I am more stoked than not because having lived the past eighteen months in a developing, conservative Muslim country leaves me wanting nothing more than to go home where even the toughest things, like finding gainful employment, seems easier than spending another day in a place where so much of who I am is constantly repressed.

It is with this infinite optimism of a more fruitful life back home in the States that I am reaching out to the Razorcake Readership™. I need ya’ll to help me find a job.

I’m making a plea to my friends to let me know if they might know someone who might know someone who might want to employ me in the greater Portland, Oregon area. (I might be willing to move, but the job will have to be insanely lucrative and/or involves me being the personal assistant to Joyce Carol Oates or Michael Cera. [Or better yet, a benefactor is always welcomed.]

To help you to help me, I’ve attached my resume. Feel free to photocopy and distribute to anyone who has a payroll.

Objective: Get money. Get paid.

Education:

- California State University. Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism with a concentration in Photojournalism. Minor in Women’s Studies.

Accrued debt: \$12,800 -

Remaining balance: \$10,800

Awards & Distinctions:

- Margaret Duff Elementary School Spelling Bee Finalist (1st-3rd Grade Division)

- S.A.N.E. Anti-Drug Use Campaign Poster Winner: A crayon drawing of an aluminum garbage can brimming with stuffed black plastic garbage bags, fish bones, generic pills, packs of cigarettes, empty “XXX” beer bottles with the slogan boldly written above, “Don’t Do Drugs / There Just Trash.” (Yes, I’m aware, wrong “there.” I was a nine-year-old ESL student. Cut me some slack.)

- Honor Roll / G.A.T.E. (Gifted and Talented Education) Student / Chronic Asthma / Gigantic Geek

Employment History:

1997

Sunny Cleaners—Quality control robot who slipped plastic bags over freshly pressed garments. The heat and humidity of working in a dry cleaner was compounded by its location in Southern California. I’d end my shift with salt chunks tangled in my hair and a white ring around the neckline of my oversized black MTX Starship T-shirt. My awkward Korean boss, a man who found his wife through an arranged marriage, asked me, in all seriousness, “You don’t have many friends, do you?”

1998

Toys ‘R’ Us—It felt like a rite of passage when an irate customer accosted me on Xmas eve because he was forced to wait in a very long line. I smirked. A Latino goth co-worker tried to gift me a stolen VHS copy of Disney’s *Mulan* to prove his crush on me. I frowned.

Disneyland—The first job I had with a uniform dress code, but had the benefit of roaming the amusement park after work. But being at Disneyland alone is a sad reminder of our ultimate loneliness. Quit after two weeks.

1999

Insurance Underwriting Firm—Learned to use a foot-pedal-operated transcription machine. Typed so much I couldn’t grip a pen. First exposure to cubicles and fluorescent lights. Realized that some people spend all of their middle age here. Terrified.

2000

Wound & Wound Toy Co.—A wind up toy store. I bought Gus the Nunzilla, a wind-up, box-shaped nun that waddled about while shooting sparks out of her mouth. My boss was a professional at wearing ape suits in Hollywood films.

2001–2002

Ebay PowerSeller—Exhibited initiative and entrepreneurship by shopping. This job was an excuse for me to go to a thrift store every week to buy T-shirts for ninety-nine cents and then resell them for ten dollars. Paid the rent and upheld the American spirit of enterprise. Learning Resource Center Peer Tutor—If you graduated from an American public high school, you are more than likely lacking in the ability to write a cohesive academic record as you had not been equipped with these skills. In comes your peer tutor—me! How’s it feel to be tutored in how to use English by a non-native English learner?

2003

Screenwriter’s Assistant—The woman I worked for penned two quasi-well-known films. One’s about life from a parrot’s perspective and the other is a fairy tale. I know I signed a confidentiality agreement, but the film she was working on while I was her assistant had to do with competing sportscasters, one of whom was a female-to-male transman. When not taking dictation or transcribing her screenplay, I assisted her in errands and learned about the value of cobblers and affordable groceries at Trader Joe’s.

Los Angeles PBS Station’s New Media Associate—My first grown-up job. Salary, health benefits, rolling office chair. While on the clock: got told to “act my age,” bet on my first NCAA pool, got regularly reprimanded for forgetting to turn on my boss’s computer for her, maintained and updated station website through content management system, watered boss’s cacti.

Began to suffer from acute fluorescent-light poisoning, symptoms of which included malaise and “working for the weekend.” Retired.



MITCH CLEM and NATION OF AMANDA

Cried three times during first months. Mom suggested that menopause was the reason behind my boss's cruelty.

2004-2005

Los Angeles PBS Station's New Media Associate—Became an expert at killing time; subsequently developed an addiction to celebrity gossip blogs and a newfangled social networking website called MySpace. Used my salary to become a card-carrying member of the ACLU, NOW, and Planned Parenthood, subsequently resulting in a deluge of junk mail from leftist organizations asking for donations. Began to suffer from acute fluorescent-light poisoning, symptoms of which included malaise and “working for the weekend.” Retired.

2005

High School After-School Tutor—Someone placed at-risk high school kids in my care and nobody got hurt.

Ebay PowerSeller's Associate—Earned a ridiculous butt-load of money (by my lowly standards) helping a woman sell “vintage” purses. Ladies love bags, and we had sacks full of them. Consumerism is beautiful sometimes.

Green Noise Records—Blasted Reigning Sound, Bent Outta Shape, and The Black Lips.

2006

Volunteer Oral English Instructor in Hunan, PRC—Taught 1,450 Chinese adolescent students. Managed to burst into tears in *only* four classes.

2007

Volunteer Oral English Instructor in Hunan, PRC
Green Noise Records—Blasted Underground Railroad To Candyland, The Zombies, and The Boys.

2008

Dishwasher—Operated the Jackson ES-2000 dishwasher. Operated mop and mobile mop bucket station. Smoked out with head cook and prep cook.

Volunteer Literature Teacher in Chittagong, Bangladesh—Learned that four hours of sleep and insurmountable responsibilities and stress might result in an optical floater which is the degeneration of one's retina and over-degeneration of one's mental and emotional health. Created an academic literature curriculum geared

towards South Asian students. Educated the next batch of female leaders of this region. Superhero.

2009

Volunteer Literature Teacher in Chittagong, Bangladesh—Survived.
American—Unemployed in a non-employing economy.

Additional Skills:

Sari wrapping, spring roll rolling, free-hand embroidery, block-printing novice, advanced ability to use Photoshop stamp filter.

Favorites:

TV Sitcom: *Small Wonder*
Running shoes: Brooks Adrenaline GTS
Thing to eat in a bowl: Pho
Xmas present: Long-reach stapler from my youngest brother
Means of sustenance: Employment

Hire me.

—Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com



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is spending money like the shit's going out of style!

SUMMER JAMS '09...

HELLO SHITTY PEOPLE "S/T" LP

The long lost full length recorded in 2001! Gritty southern pop punk with bass parts that make Matt Freeman look like an idiot. I'm half joking. Mike Collins is a mad man. If you dig on old timey East Bay pop punk and bands like Future Virgins, Snuggle, Hickey, Los Canadians etc you're going to love this fucking thing.

RINGERS "HURRY UP AND WAIT" 12"

7 new songs (roughly 20 minutes of music). Easily their best record to date. Well written, melodic punk that Todd thinks sounds like a cross between the Clash and Bent Outta Shape. Close enough!

SHANNON & THE CLAMS

"TROUBLEMAKER" LP

It's 1964 and someone dosed the prom band with acid. The result is an LP full of borderline psych garage rock, surf, doo wop jams that'll put the git up in your go. I know you think I'm crazy but I defy you to go see them and not fall in love.

SNUGGLE "TBA" LP

Yes I'm serious. After years of waiting they finally finished this and it's going to peel the top of your head off. Gut wrenching pop punk that'll put a tear in your eye, a smile on your face, a full throated chorus in your mouth and a beer in your hand.

Also coming this year, records by... The Sneaky Pinks, Statues Personal and the Pizzas, An Uneasy Peace, Pipsqueak, Nobunny and a split 7" with Snuggle and No High Fives To Bullshit and probably more...

CHECK OUT www.1234GORECORDS.com for more details.
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KISSOFDEATH

GREETINGS FROM BAND CAMP

Made some new friends and had a great time!

I hope to come back next year.

- XOXOXO

P.S - I picked up some sweet new records!



OUT NOW:

GUILTMAKER "DILEMMAS" CD/LP

WHISKEY TRENCH "TELEVISION" CD/LP

NORTH LINCOLN "S/T" 7"

BOMB THE MUSIC INDUSTRY! /

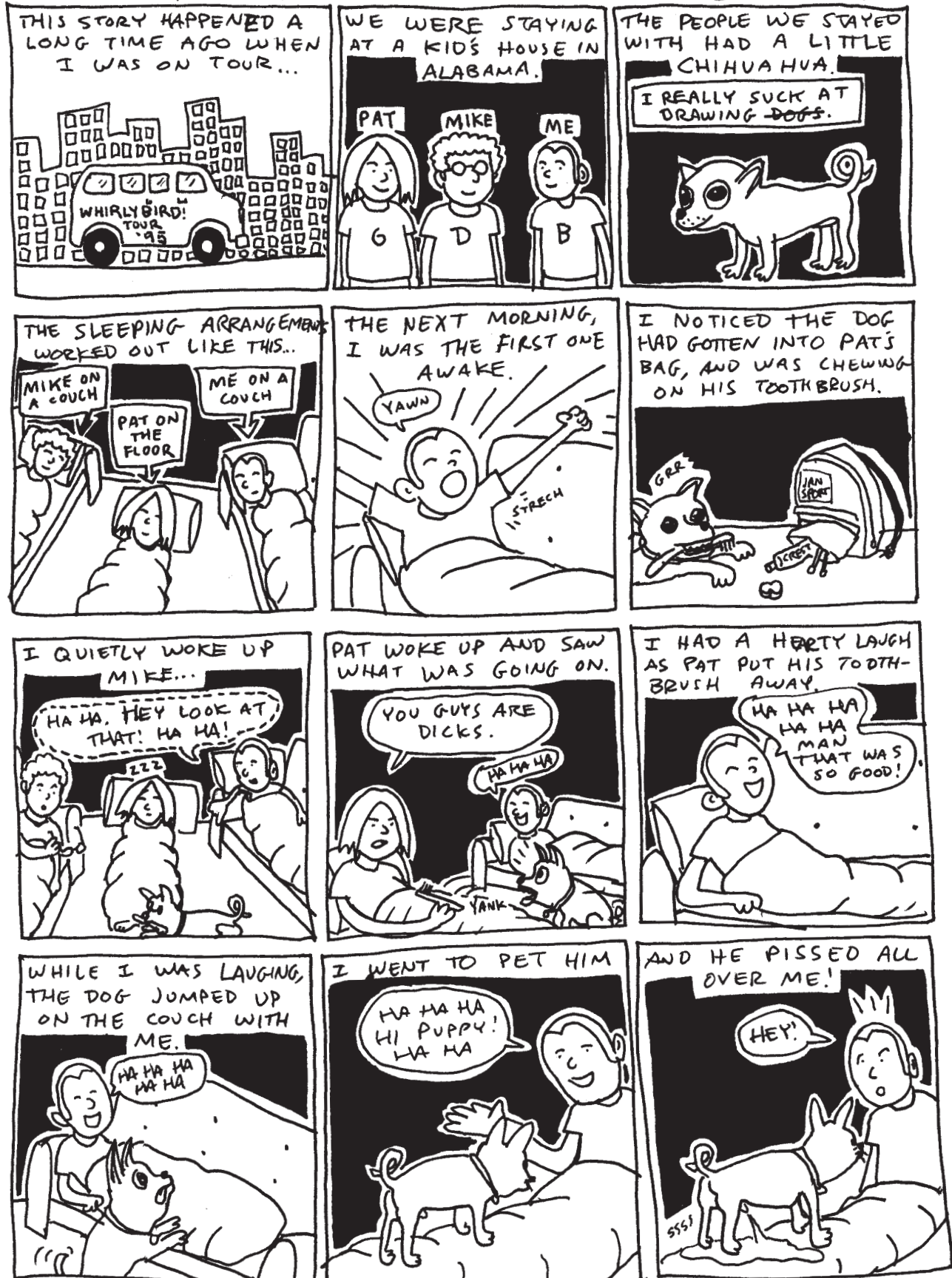
LAURA STEVENSON & THE CANS "SPLIT" 7"



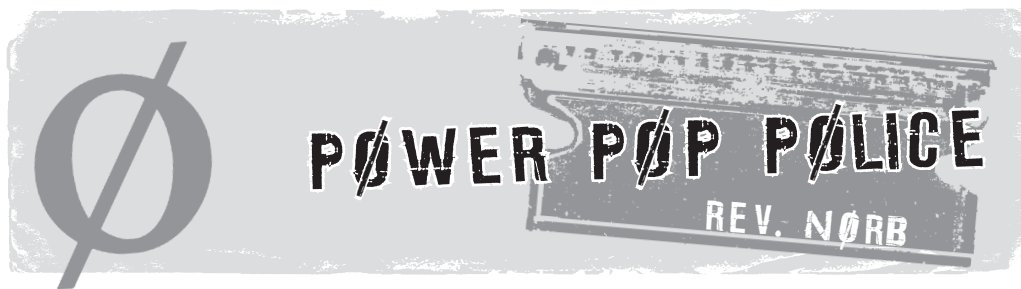
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MY THIRTY-FIFTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT



BEN SNAKEPIT: P.O. Box 4944T ATX 78765: BENSNAKEPIT@GMAIL.COM



“My one sentence legacy ROCKS.”

A COLUMN WRITTEN BY A MAN WHO ANNOUNCES AT THE BEGINNING OF TRACK ONE THAT HE HATES EVERYTHING PAST ALBUM NO. 3½, “IT’S ALIVE!”

The details of my photo running in *SPIN* unfolded just as i had always, in my seminal rock fantasies, hoped, wished, and dreamed they might: *U2 on the cover*. Check. *Photo the size of a postage stamp*. Check. *Depicted in wig that had been buried for years in my back hallway under a set of rims and tires for a '74 Ford® Maverick*. Check. *Nazi flag as backdrop*. Check. I mean, *Norman friggin' Rockwell* couldn't depict a scene more picture perfect than this throaty culmination of my countless decades of daydreams of Wanton Rock Glory™! *QUAKE BEFORE THE MAJESTY OF MY BE-WIGGED, BE-SWASTIKAED, BE-POSTAGE STAMPED MUG!!!* ((Note: In all fairness, the photo is actually more the size of these square Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers® pins i used to buy at the record store in the mall than a standard postage stamp, but my face is more the size of a pencil eraser, so i think it all averages out)) I mean, you know how it is, right? You're like thirteen years old and you start buying rock magazines and you tear out the pictures and you put them on your walls and you read about bands you never heard of that put out records you've never heard and you buy the records and you get a guitar and you start a band and find new bands that sound better than the old bands and you learn songs and you rock and you roll and you probably suck and you jump around and you dress funny and you get your hair cut weird and you think GOD DAMMIT SOMEDAY I'M GONNA HAVE MY PICTURE IN ONE OF THOSE MAGAZINES because you're a teenager and you don't know any better and you play at your high school and people throw eggs at you but some people throw cookies which is kind of funny and you rock and you roll and you get sweaty and people pay attention to you and older people buy you drinks and you play places you never played before and you hang out with other people in bands and you plot world domination and you make a record and your band breaks up and you get a new band and you play more places and you make more records and every time you go to the SuperAmerica™ to buy frozen pizzas you see these stupid magazines and you pretty much think all the bands on the front cover

suck but you still think GOD DAMMIT SOMEDAY I'M GONNA HAVE MY PICTURE IN ONE OF THOSE MAGAZINES because WE ROCK BETTER THAN THOSE SHITTY BANDS ON THE COVER GOD DAMMIT because you're in your twenties and you don't know any better and you get in the van and you get out of the van repeat this ten thousand times and your band breaks up and you start a new band and you play a bunch of places and make a bunch of records but whenever you go to the Kwik Trip® to buy SweetTarts™ you still see those stupid magazines and you don't even care about how dumb the bands on the cover are any more because decades of institutionalized rock idiocy have inured you to the whole ordeal but yet you *still* think GOD DAMMIT SOMEDAY I'M GONNA HAVE MY PICTURE IN ONE OF THOSE MAGAZINES because THEY SIMPLY CAN NOT KEEP IGNORING ME because you're in your thirties and you don't know any better and one day you're in your forties and you're like, shit, i have to do something else right now and i can't be in a band for a while and then you're not in a band for like five years and one day you wake up and your picture's in *SPIN* with a dead Chihuahua on your head standing in front of a Nazi flag. THAT, my friends, is HOW THE WORLD WORKS™ ((just to clarify, i've honestly never cared about *SPIN*, possibly because i don't think they invented it 'til i was about nineteen. I bought the first issue, and the one about the ten-year anniversary of punk rock, and that was it for lifetime *SPIN* consumption until the powers-that-be saw fit to smack my eraser head on page 64 of the April 2009 issue. Of course, compared to *Rolling Stone*—which i have never purchased an issue of, *ever*—my *SPIN* collection is quite comprehensive [[i think the first rock mag i ever bought {{if you don't count some KISS poster thing on which my brother and i went halves}} was an issue of *Hit Parader* with Ted Nugent on the cover {{the interviewer, James Spina, told The Nuge that he'd personally rather listen to the Clash or the Jam than Ted Nugent. Ted said—and i quote—“You are missing this huge steamroller called TED NUGENT who is

OUTROCKING them ALL!!!” which struck me as hilarious even as a thirteen-year-old}}. I quickly graduated to *CREEM*, then *Trouser Press*, then *Flipside* and so long mainstream rock press, although i suppose i have purchased three issues of *SPIN* in the interceding twenty-eight years so it's not like my shit don't stink i guess]]). But, yes. After like three decades of ROCK, my big day came. I am in *SPIN*. On page 64. Wearing a wig, and standing in front of a Nazi flag. *That's how we roll, bay-bee!* Of course, there *is* some logical explanation behind these matters: My pic—along with those of Paulie Ramone, Ericky Ramone, and Paulie Ramone—wound up gracing the April 2009 *SPIN* owing to some hip, pithy and with-it gent writing a three-page article on the ((largely mid-90's)) phenomenon of Ramones cover albums—a phenomenon to which my old band, Boris The Sprinkler, contributed a stripped-down take on “End of the Century” in 1995 ((it somehow never fails to slay me how some things—like, oh, say, *covering a Ramones album from start to finish*—can be COMPLETELY IGNORABLE when they're actually HAPPENING, but yet, fourteen years later, they're suddenly printworthy material. *God DAMN, do we have our ears to the ground here at SPIN!* Because, you know, *covering somebody else's record from start to finish* is the kind of idea that just gets *better and better* with time, you know what i mean? It's much like Crystal Pepsi™ or the Iraq War® in that regard)). So anyway, they do this little thing on Ramones tribute records, and, at the end, there's this section subtitled “*Why Buy The First Eight Albums By The Ramones When You Can Own Them By Somebody Else?*” and there we are, in all our be-wigged glory—underneath Screeching Weasel and to the left of the Beatnik Termites ((the wigs, of course, were there to evoke Ramoneyness, and the Nazi flag was there because we needed a red backdrop for the cover, and the Ramones always said they wanted to pose for an album cover in front of a Nazi flag but their record company wouldn't let 'em, and our guitar player knew a girl whose grandpa stole a flag off of a German coffin in World War II, and we know a double-dog-dare when we see one [[though



RYAN GELATIN

longshoreman's hat—a hat is a hat is a hat on a Rock guy, and it's means you're fuckin' bald [[the fourth guy in the photo is obviously Marcus Welby, M.D., or Dr. Kildare, or some other dimly-remembered TV surgeon of bygone years]]). Almost as good as having my camouflaged kisser in *SPIN* were the one-line reviews given to each album. I figure, hey, tragic as this may sound, my salad days as a minor-league punk rock star—such as they were—are really, really, *really* likely to be behind me at this point in time, though i don't care for salad so it's kind of a wash. This one-line review of a fourteen-year-old cover of a twenty-nine-year-old Ramones album is, very likely, MY SOLE LEGACY IN THE MAINSTREAM ROCK PRESS. This is IT. The SUM TOTAL of my LIFE'S WORK as a ROCK DUDE. My fifteen minutes ((twenty-five words?)) of fame. Let's set the stage a little. Here's what the fellow had to say about Screaching Weasel's re-released version of the first Ramones album: *"The first album, along with bonus original tracks. For Ramones fans who've always felt the debut needed four awful songs."* **MM-BWAH-HA-HA!** The Vindictives' shameful butchery of "Leave Home" gets this: *"The Ramones' second album, sung by a castrated Muppet."* **DOUBLE-BWAH-HA-HA!** The Queers' "Rocket to Russia"? *"The third, sung by a man with a very bad head cold."* **TRIPLE-BWAH-HA-HA!** And my own? Ladies and gentlemen, i present to you my enduring, eternal legacy: *"The fifth album, sung by a man who announces at the beginning of track one that he hates everything past album No. 3½, 'It's Alive.'"* **AN UNPRECEDENTED QUADRUPLE-BWAH-HA-HA!** I fuckin' love it. My one sentence legacy ROCKS. Keep up the good work, young man, and i might just buy a *fourth* issue of *SPIN* before the year 2019 is thru.

Love,
Norb

Hey, at least our record wasn't produced by a convicted murderer!

we were at least tactful enough to arrange ourselves in front of the flag in such a fashion that the actual nature of our backdrop was not immediately discernable to the casual observer, or at least not to the *SPIN* editorial staff. Hey, at least *our* record wasn't produced by a convicted murderer!]. The sunglasses i returned to ShopKo™ immediately after the photo shoot)). It made my day ((until, of course, i realized that i had just shelled out \$4.99 in a Texas airport to buy a magazine with [[*retch!*]] U2 on the cover. I mean, you think i look stupid with a dead Chihuahua on my head? That dude from U2 is wearing a leather jacket on the cover of *SPIN*, and it's a *brand-new leather jacket!* You're not

supposed to wear a brand-new leather jacket out in public! You're supposed to piss on it and drag it behind your Harley® for a hundred miles, and *then* you wear it! And the dude wearing it has got all this weird black shit around his eyes, he looks like *HE* got pissed on and dragged behind a Harley® for a hundred miles! *Idiot! Drag the JACKET, not YOURSELF!* The guy to his left looks like he was the guy who did the pissing, and the guy to his right is wearing a hat, which, if you're in a band, always has and always will mean you're going bald, unless the hat has antlers, in which case it just means you are musky and dominant. Dude, you can wear a taxi driver hat, a baseball cap, or a



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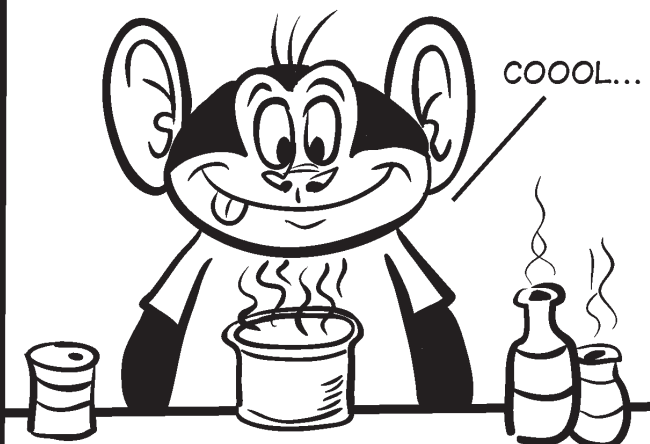


CHICO Simio

"DUMB
LITTLE
MONKEY"

ART.

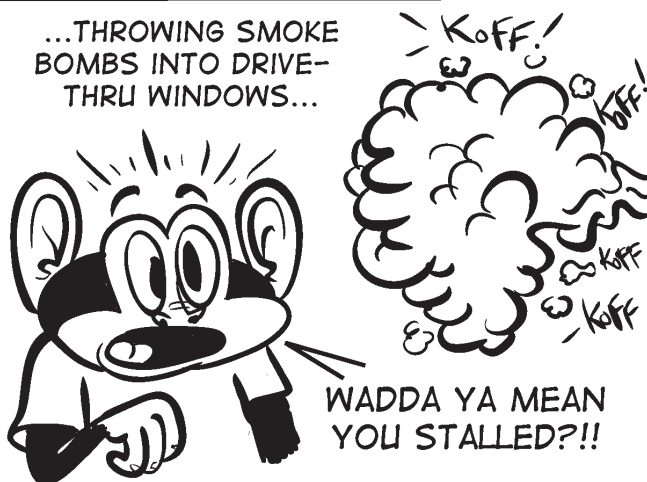
I DID A LOT OF DUMB STUFF WHEN I WAS A
KID, LIKE MIXING RANDOM CHEMICALS I
FOUND IN THE GARAGE...

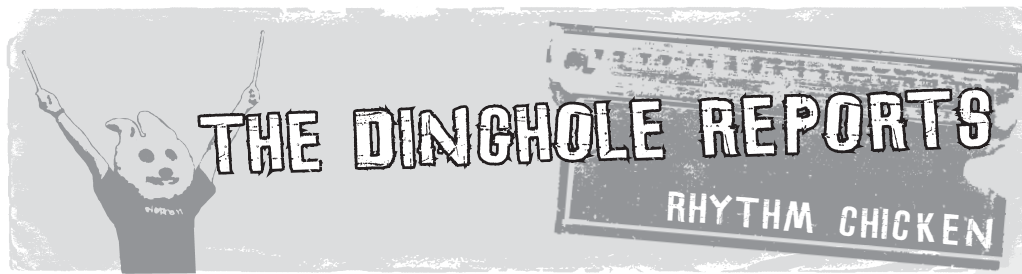


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Ruckus Returns to Titletown!

The Dinghole Reports
By The Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

--- We join Francis and Sicnarf in the tight confines of the Rhythm Chicken’s northwoods trailer up in Door County, WI. Currently, Sicnarf is assisting Francis in removing a large lower-case “e” he managed to cram into his dinghole (see photo, Dinghole Reports, issue #35). ---

(EEEEEEEEEEEEYYOOOOW!!! JUST YANK IT OUT!!! – F.F.)

[Mmmmmmmffffgh!!! There! It’s out! Damn, Funyuns! How’d you get that up your dinghole anyway? – Dr. S.]

(Where there’s a will, there’s a way. Besides, SOMEBODY’S got to keep up the dinghole stretching around here. Ol’ Birdbrain ain’t been stretching his fair share lately, that’s for sure! – F.F.)

--- Just then, the Rhythm Chicken enters the dilapidated trailer and notices his lower-case “e” on the floor, covered in dingjuice and blood. His feathers begin to ruffle. ---

WHAT THE CLUCK IS GOIN’ ON HERE? Francis? Sicnarf? I don’t remember giving ANYONE permission to dingstuff my lower-case “e” during my absence.

(Well, there’s been such a lack of dinghole stretching this winter while you were off sinning around Las Vegas. I just wanted to surprise you with a quality dingstuffing upon your return. ...uh, SURPRISE! – F.F.)

Okay, I AM impressed, and, in a perverse way, flattered. I presume you will clean my “e” and replace it to the shelf of righteous plunder.

(Of course, Señor Chicken! – F.F.)

[So, tell us, Mr. Chicken, how was your big crazy winter in Sin City? – Dr. S.]

First of all, I will never refer to Las Vegas as Sin City. My first night back in Milwaukee proved more potent than an entire winter in Las Vegas. That aside, however, I will say I had a great winter. I’ve come to realize that winter desert biking is one of my new favorite hobbies. I do feel a little guilty and weak for

escaping one of the worst winters Wisconsin has seen in decades, but I sure saved on that heating bill! I did get to know some quality watering holes in the Vegas area, and strategic urban biking is always a fast-paced challenge. I attended a Cubs/White Sox game, a NASCAR event, and even a minor league game of the Las Vegas 51s on “dollar beer night”!

[Oh yeah? Did the Rally Rabbit make an appearance? – Dr. S.]

--- The needle scratches across the vinyl and all heads turn to Sicnarf. ---

[Uh....I mean....So, did the Rhythm Chicken play any gigs in the entertainment capitol of the world? – Dr. S.]

Yes. Yes, I played some gigs. I played some rock gigs, and I played some very peculiar gigs. I would have to say the strangest and best gig I played was at the talent show for the Roy Martin Middle School in a very “ghetto” area of town.

(A talent show at a MIDDLE SCHOOL? I’m sorry, Chicken, but you’re like forty years old or something! – F.F.)

I’m thirty-eight, thank you. Anyway, my Main Hen was an English teacher at this particular middle school who was also in charge of this year’s talent show. They needed an act to perform while the judges tallied up the scores to announce a winner, and she thought a Wisconsinite in a chicken head bashing away on his drums would be distraction enough. Well, the night before the actual talent show was the dress rehearsal. The 7th and 8th graders’ exhibits of talent were just as special and questionable as my own, so I felt right at home. During dress rehearsal, Rheme the Magician pulled out a white dove as part of his act. The dove instantly flew up into the rafters and stayed there. We were all trying to get it down by throwing all sorts of things up at him. Despite our earnest attacks on the white dove of peace, Rheme’s dove was determined to stay up in the rafters and we gave up. The show must go on.

Dinghole Report #102:
Ruckus Martin Middle School!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #433)

The talent show took place in the school gymnasium. The bleachers were filling up soon after the doors opened. The show was about to start and the crowd started to quiet down a little. Then it happened. It was perfect. Rheme the

Magician’s white dove of peace, twenty-four hours after his valiant escape, decided it was time to descend. He flew down and ATTACKED THE CROWD! Children and adults were screaming! I was in awe! The dove repeatedly swooped down and kept making the kids scream again and again before he escaped once again to the rafters. Tears of laughter were literally streaming down my face! I was one-upped by another feathered friend! Would his ruckus outdo mine?

The crowd settled down and the talent show began. Towards the end of the adolescent circus of chaos there was a pleasant surprise. Saul and Jose were a duet who played a fine piece on two accordions! Two middle school boys who can stand in front of their peers and play a duet on accordions earn my respect. That simply DEMANDS respect!

Ever since the dove attack, the crowd was rather uppity and ill-behaved. Even during the quiet acts, they were rude and talkative. These were “ghetto kids” after all. Well, then I walked out from backstage wearing my chickenhead. They looked on, somewhat stunned. I stood at the drumset and held up a sign that read “SILENCE!” Miraculously, the crowd instantly muted. You could hear a pin drop! I’m sure they were mostly confused, but I like to think they were at least a little scared! What was the scary old guy in the dirty chickenhead going to do?

When the bleachers were sufficiently silenced, I then held up my other sign, which read “YELL!”...which they did! They stomped their feet on the bleachers and yelled almost as loud as during the dove attack. I sat at the drums and pounded out a healthy dose of old-guy Wisconsin backwoods ruckus rhythms. During a break in the ruckus, I raised my wings towards the rafters and the stands simply ERUPTED in adolescent screams! In that fancy middle school gymnasium, in the heart of one of Las Vegas’ worst neighborhoods, the Rhythm Chicken made a large crowd of 7th and 8th graders laugh, smile, and scream. Then he rose again and silenced the crowd just as swiftly. What would he do next? I crouched somewhat, turned around, and hopped backstage. The place went nuts. The Chicken gig was a smash hit, but I couldn’t help but feel that Rheme’s dove had won the show.

Just five days later, I found myself once again in Los Angeles. Mr. Todd Taylor was zooming me all around the City of Angels, assisting in my ongoing mission to bring ruckus to L.A. The first gig was at the base of the Watts Towers. The second was at the bottom of a pool at the Channel Street skatepark in San Pedro. The third was on a rooftop of a



TODD TAYLOR

Rheme's dove finally died and fell from the rafters, his white feathers all dirty.

I paused to think about my similarly dirty chickenhead.

punk rock house. The fourth and fifth were in the skatepark Todd fought to have built in Highland Park. Then came the gig of the day.

Dinghole Report #103:

Garage Rock Ruckus in L.A.!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #439)

After a full day of bringing my ruckus to the people of L.A., we set up the drums in the garage of Razorcake HQ. Todd's wife, Mary-Clare, was about to arrive home and we wanted to give her some surprise ruckus when she pulled in. I sat at the drums and pulled on the head. Just as she pulled in, Todd opened the garage door and I sat there about to unleash my untamed Chicken rock. Mary-Clare was on her cell phone so I waited. She sat in the car talking. Todd waited with his camera and I in ready-to-go assault mode. The call lasted quite long and the entire element of surprise was gone. A short while later Mary-Clare, leaned out of her car and asks, "Oh, were you guys waiting for me?" It was so awkward and anti-climatic that I declared it the best Chicken gig of the L.A. tour thus far!

The call was done and Mary-Clare joined Todd at the mouth of the garage. I pounded out a most raucous dose of garage rock, a delayed wedding gift! I played my drum for them, ba-rum-pum-pum-pum! Todd and Mary-Clare clapped politely. In a city of millions, I played my best gig to two folks in a driveway from a small garage, right next to the bikes. Not long after that, I received a text message from my Main Hen in Vegas. It seems that Rheme's dove finally died and fell from the rafters, his white feathers all dirty. I paused to think about my similarly dirty chickenhead. He may have out-performed me that day, but my ruckus is far-enduring!

(Wow, Chicken! Vegas! Los Angeles! Where else did you play? – F.F.)

Dinghole Report #104:

Ruckus Returns to Titletown!

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #444)

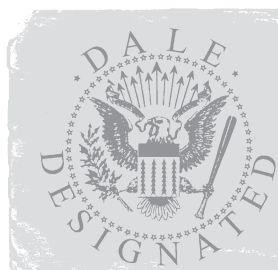
It was about one week after I returned to America's Dairyland. Bob Log III, who

played at L.A.'s Spaceland while I was out there, was now playing at the Crunchy Frog in beautiful downtown Green Bay. Rev. Nørb was debuting his own one-man-band this night as well and Timebomb Tom asked if the Rhythm Chicken would want to round out the bill. A friend and I headed down to the Emerald City and hit the skatepark, then Jake's Pizza for a pick-up order, and on to the gig! Rev. Nørb was on first, wearing his GEEK antler-helmet and an outfit that almost gave me a headache. He played the most interesting version of "Psycho Killer" I've ever heard! The farting foot-stomp keyboard parts were hysterical! Then, from the ladies' room in back, was heard a most familiar rumble. A small crowd gathered around to witness the less than glamorous homecoming of Wisconsin's second official state bird. OUTTA MY WAY, ROBIN! I GOT DRUMS TO SMASH! My less-than-trusty old chickenkit was falling apart rather quickly in the tight little bathroom. I made an executive split-decision and decided to abort. I kicked the drums around, flailed about a little bit, and then sulked back into the corner of the shitter. This chicken has come home to roost yet again.

[(Amen! – F.F. & Dr. S.)]

–Rhythm Chicken

rhythmchicken@hotmail.com



I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

"It was like exactly like watching Wile E. Coyote whack face-first into a rock ledge."

SHITTY PARENTS

I had a severe moment of "man, what the fuck?!" the other day at work. My place of employment is an outpatient pharmacy located inside a smaller family medical facility, where I clock in as a pharmacy technician, legally slinging the dope, if you will. From our side of the counter, we see a range of different people everyday, from infants to the elderly and everything else in between, all coming to check in/pick up prescriptions for a wide range of reasons. Now that I've been working in a hospital environment for a while, I've come to expect that people aren't really all that together with their thoughts when inside the walls of a medical facility.

It could be that they've just been handed some detrimental news regarding the seriousness of their present health a few minutes before checking in with us. It also may be that a family member or loved one has just been handed the same news for the person coming to check in on their behalf. Or, it could be that people coming to our pharmacy just might be in a FTW mood that particular day because of their health condition, and the last thing they want to be reminded of is having to pay for something that may or may not increase the quality of their life. Don't get me wrong; not all of our patients that come in are downers. I've actually gotten to know quite a few of our regulars, especially my retired homies, to the point where I almost feel like a bartender rather than someone who's processing RX meds.

More often than not, some patients come in with their young children, or the children themselves are the patients. I know that, for the most part, any young kid who comes into a building with nurses and doctors is going to be scared, even throw a fit, depending on the reason for his or her visit. I remember vividly having to get my annual blood tests as a kid, *hating* the nurses that used the old-fashioned poke 'n draw needles to tap my veins, unlike the shrewd butterfly needles they use now for blood tests. I'd flail and kick like a seizure-ridden monkey when I saw that dreaded tray the nurse would set down in the exam room.

So, yeah, most of the lil' ones are pretty petrified of shots or blood tests, and almost all the time we can hear 'em screeching across our large waiting area and down the hall, like a young Tom Araya doing the

intro scream of "Angel of Death" for the first time. I almost laughed out loud not too long ago last summer when I saw a boy about six or seven years old bolt out of the nurse clinic and down the hallway towards the automatic door leading to the parking garage. "I bet I know what he just saw, poor little guy," I said to a couple of my pals in the pharmacy. A split second later, the mom came busting ass after the kid, and I couldn't help but root for the kid's obviously vain attempt at escape from his date with that needle.

For these little tykes, I have nothing but sympathy. But then there's the particular type of free-range, heathen child who's a product of their negligent upbringing. A little over a month ago, a couple with their two children (about four and six years of age) stepped out of the elevator and proceeded to check in with us to get a prescription going that a doctor just wrote for the father. Shortly after the four of them sat down in the waiting area, the two children started chasing each other *all* around the waiting area, like they were competing in some kind of hyperactive marathon with each other. This went on for over a couple of minutes, with mom and dad watching them like they were watching a TV—both with blank stares on their faces, mumbling to each other.

Patients coming in and out of the area literally had to dodge this sorry-ass excuse for parenting, all while the parents of these reckless kids continued to talk with each other while watching. Right as I was telling one of our other techs that one of those kids is going to take out one of our older patients, the older boy ran full speed, forehead-first into the lip of a counter. It was like exactly like watching Wile E. Coyote whack face-first into a rock ledge: head suddenly stops and the legs go way up into the air, then falling flat on his ass with the head slamming down on the ground a split second later. I had to stifle my laughter, being one of those sick bastards who sits and chortles at YouTube videos of various people eating it, especially when they're simply asking for it.

I was glad the kid was okay, and, of course, as soon as he ate it, only *then* the father came running over to grab him. A few of my co-workers said, "You know, Dale, that's not very cool, you standing

there, laughing at that kid. He could have been really hurt!" I reply, "You know what, you're absolutely right. It would've been funnier if the father or mother chased after him to *begin* with and hit *their* head on that counter for not doing their damn job." Then came the hand-wringing, "That's still not a nice thing to say! If you had kids"—I put my hand up and stopped them right there—"If I had kids, they probably wouldn't be anything near *The Brady Bunch*, but they sure as hell wouldn't be running amuck like cracked-out simians, especially in a hospital situation where they could seriously hurt an unsuspecting older person. Why is it that the end product of someone's bad parenting is to be accepted by anyone these days? No, it's *totally* unacceptable. Other people's children aren't anyone else's problem, including mine." Then comes the age-old, limp-wristed excuse that always ends these conversations I have with people about shitty parents, "You don't have kids, so it's easy for you to say!" as they walk off in a huff. "Man, whatever," I think to myself, "If you're getting this defensive and/or combative about someone else's bad mommy/daddy skills, maybe you have some serious kid wrangling issues of your own."

And therein lies the question: Is there really that many more problem kids now than there were when I was growing up as a little, snot-nosed egghead in the '70s? I'm thirty-nine now, and I don't really think so. A lot of my friends had somewhat gnarly upbringings when we were kids, but a fair share turned out okay; the others not so good. Both of my parents were strict and used the common-law knowledge of discipline—you fuck up and there *will* be consequences, period, but we always knew exactly why. There was none of this plea-bargaining crap or the "trying to reason" modern hippie shit with us three, like I hear parents ridiculously try with their kids out in public over and over again. Young kids understand one thing, and that's the rules and boundaries set by their guardians. No rules + no boundaries = wild horses with no fence in sight. Good luck. In some cases, I've seen with my own eyes that a parent telling their child "no" is like one of the worst things that the kid has ever heard.

Getting told “no” is like some taboo, four-letter word that the kid just can’t compute. Full-on tantrum time, and this just isn’t the wee lads and lasses either—I’m talking about fully grown teenagers. Are you kidding me?

The other thing I’ve noticed as I’ve gotten older is the gall some of these younger kids have. Perfect example: I’m stopped at a traffic signal and a few grade schoolers are crossing the crosswalk in front of me. Some of these little pricks will actually stare you down, like they’re ready to fight. I laugh, of course, being it only makes ‘em that much more frowny and humiliated, especially when they’re trying to act bad with their pals. And then I stop laughing and think—I would never, EVER stare down some high school kid driving around in a car (let alone an adult my age), knowing damn well that they’d slow down and say something to the effect of, “What the hell are you looking at, you little shit?” before veering their car at you. It’s just the way it was when I was growing up—you lipped off to an older kid, you were likely to get a slap in the mouth (if you were lucky), and that’s just the way it was. That kind of pecking order doesn’t seem to jive across the board these days. Between parents who deny that their little angel “would ever do anything like that,” to the parents who are just aching to sue someone, the unwritten law of respecting your elders has seemed to fall by the wayside. Where *do* they get this kind of attitude, Mom and Dad?

To all the mothers and fathers—please don’t get me wrong—not all kids have lame parents. Anyone can definitely see the parents reflected in a child, even if you’ve never met the kid before in your life. Any kind of behavior is learned behavior. When a kid is on track and respectful, I always try to make it a point to tell the parent(s) that they’ve done some good work.

To all you parents fighting the good fight: Right on. Your hard work and perseverance doesn’t go unnoticed. Setting the example that it’s still possible to raise a respectable kid, especially in times as rough as these, is something to be very proud of.

To all you parents who could care less about how your child carries on? Yank the leash and get it in your fucking head that “responsibility,” like the word “no,” isn’t a four-letter-word. Contrary to popular belief, having children *isn’t* a right. Enough.



I’m Against It,
—Designated Dale

designateddale@yahoo.com



CRAIG HORKY

I had to stifle my laughter,
being one of those
sick bastards
who sits and chortles at
YouTube videos of various
people eating it.

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Backing Up the Underground One Song At a Time.



KIYOSHI IS LETTING ME
MAKE AN ENTIRE EPISODE
OF WON TON NOT NOW!
THIS IS MY COMIC ABOUT
SEXY LADIES!



YOU KNOW WHAT I LOVE?
WHEN A LADY WEARS A
MENS SUIT WITH A
FEDORA HAT. EVERYTHING
IS ALL OPEN AND SEXY.
TOTALLY SMOKIN'.



OR HOW ABOUT WHEN A REALLY SEXY LADY
WEARS A "WIFE BEATER" TANK TOP WITH
BLUE JEANS? THE OUTSIDE SAYS "I'M ONE OF
THE DUDES." BUT UNDERNEATH SAYS "SEXY
LADY."



ANY MAN WOULD PITCH A TENT (CAMPING)
WHEN HE SEES A SEXY LADY IN A CARHARTT
WORK COAT, FLANNEL SHIRT AND BACKWARDS
BASEBALL CAP. I MEAN, DUDE!



HOW ABOUT A FLAT TOP HAIR CUT? TOTALLY! RIGHT?!



DON'T FORGET THE COMBAT BOOTS.
JUST LIKE NANCY SINATRA, SEXY.
VERY SEXY.



DORA LOVES BOOTS! ♥

AW HELL!
JUST GIMME
THE WORKS!



AF 6/09



“I’m not playing your little reindeer games.”

Nardwuar vs. Tom

The Human Serviette Morello

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Tom: My name is Tom Morello. I am The Nightwatchman.

Nardwuar: Tom Morello, welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Tom: Thank you very much. It’s always a pleasure to be here.

Nardwuar: Now Tom, you have a connection to Vancouver, to British Columbia, Canada, don’t you?

Tom: I feel very connected, but I’m not certain... do I have, like, a child here that I don’t know about?

Nardwuar: Kind of, you have. One of your idols did an album at the Peace Arch. Paul Robeson. [Nardwuar pulls out a Paul Robeson LP] What can you tell the people about Paul Robeson?

Tom: I’m a huge fan of Paul Robeson for a number of reasons. One is his deep, rich, baritone voice, much like my own gives me a chance to be a singer in a world of tenors. Two, Paul Robeson was a true renaissance man, and he used his music and his acting ability to forward the cause of social justice and racial equality.

Nardwuar: And this particular record, check it out, Paul Robeson *Live at the Peace Arch Park*. Were you aware of that concert?

Tom: No.

Nardwuar: That was in 1953 when he was banned from performing outside of United States of America, so he went to the Canada/U.S. border at Blaine and did a gig.

Tom: You mean he was banned from playing inside the United States of America?

Nardwuar: No, he was actually banned from leaving the United States of America—

Tom: Oh, leaving. Right, right, right.

Nardwuar: So he went to the Peace Arch.

Tom: Because he knew what was going on and they didn’t want him to report back to the outside world what...

Nardwuar: Yeah, I didn’t quite understand that. They banned him from leaving the States instead of kicking him out of the States.

Tom: Well, thank goodness I’m not under that same ban yet, so I’m able to be here in Vancouver today.

Nardwuar: Well, actually, he worked around it. He was able to do a gig at the Peace Arch

at Blaine, Washington, the border between Vancouver and Seattle, roughly Vancouver and Bellingham, and he did a gig on the top of a flatbed truck.

Tom: Well, good for him.

Nardwuar: And that was *Live at the Peace Arch*, 1953, Paul Robeson.

Tom: I’ve done one or two gigs on flatbed trucks, and so now I feel an even greater kinship with Paul Robeson. Thank you.

Nardwuar: Tom Morello, did the good guys win?

Tom: When?

Nardwuar: Last night (during the U.S. elections).

Tom: [laughs] The better guys won. I think it remains to be seen how good the good guys are once they’re in office because we’ve had eight years of prideful, ignorant meanness and it’s going to take a lot to turn that tide back. We’ll see. Can I have the Paul Robeson record?

Nardwuar: Umm, we’ll talk about that later there, Tom Morello.

Tom: All right. We’ll negotiate.

Nardwuar: But Tom Morello, continue on here. Obama. He’s also good friends with millionaire Warren Buffett. Should we be afraid of Warren Buffett?

Tom: I think we should be more afraid if he were friends with Jimmy Buffett, because I think that...

Nardwuar: Ba-boom!

Tom: [laughs] I think that...

Nardwuar: Then he would infect people with his money and his songs.

Tom: [laughs] That’s right. If there’s a cabinet position open for Jimmy Buffett, I think that’s when I may once again vow to move to Canada.

Nardwuar: Tom Morello, on your brand new CD you have a song called “Saint Isabella.”

Tom: “Saint Isabelle,” yes.

Nardwuar: And you are a saint, aren’t you, Tom Morello?

Tom: No, but my dear, departed aunt Isabelle was.

Nardwuar: But you’re a nice guy. You’re a nice guy, aren’t you?

Tom: To hear you tell it.

Nardwuar: Tom, I think you’re pretty

nice because, do you remember playing with Rage in Baltimore? A gig where there were cops protesting outside a gig that you were playing?

Tom: That was not an uncommon occurrence during the history of Rage Against The Machine.

Nardwuar: So there were some cops protesting outside of one of your gigs, and I heard that you, just to kind of screw with the cops, bought the cops coffee and doughnuts to help with their protest.

Tom: There were actually about 300 to 350 cops who were picketing the Rage Against The Machine show and we bought them 350 doughnuts. So we figured if they weren’t going to be out serving and protecting the people of Baltimore, they might at least be well-fed.

Nardwuar: And they had no idea that you guys bought it. Nobody did that.

Tom: Oh, no. We sent a note. We sent a note signed, “Love, Rage Against The Machine. Here’s your doughnuts.”

Nardwuar: Tom Morello, you also have a connection to *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

Tom: [laughs]

Nardwuar: What is the Tom Morello connection to *The Dukes of Hazzard*?

Tom: I have a muscle car that is similar to the car in *The Dukes of Hazzard*, but I can’t wait to hear what you’re referring to.

Nardwuar: On your new record you have a song called “Iron...”

Tom: Wheel.”

Nardwuar: And that has also on the song...

Tom: Shooter Jennings.

Nardwuar: Whose dad is...

Tom: Waylon Jennings.

Nardwuar: Who wrote the song...

Tom: For *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

Nardwuar: There you go. There’s your connection! Did you know that?

Tom: There is a connection, and I believe I’ve now won the prize: the Paul Robeson record. Give it up. [laughs]

Nardwuar: I’m just wondering here, just wondering here, Tom Morello, though, Shooter Jennings. What can you say about Shooter? That’s pretty cool. Waylon Jennings’s son.

Tom: Yeah, Shooter's lovely. He actually was the engineer on the very first Nightwatchman demos back in 2002. There you have it.

Nardwuar: Tom Morello, the Justice Tour, you had Wayne Kramer of MC5 aboard on that, didn't you?

Tom: Yes.

Nardwuar: How were your eating habits going on that particular tour? Because Wayne Kramer, who was of the MC5, he made his band eat cottage cheese and T-bone steaks for six months straight in the MC5.

Tom: Well, I'm a grown man, and Wayne Kramer didn't make me eat anything I didn't want to on the Justice Tour. He's a lovely fellow and it was great to have him.

Nardwuar: Did you cause Metallica to get a psychiatrist?

Tom: [laughs] I didn't cause Metallica to get a psychiatrist, but the performance enhancement coach who you see in the movie *Some Kind of Monster* was referred to them by Metallica's management, who at the time was also managing Audioslave, a band in need of a psychiatrist.

Nardwuar: 'Cause they were afraid that, you know, they were going to lose Audioslave. They were afraid they lost to Rage. So they hired a psychiatrist for Metallica, so you helped save Metallica!

Tom: Absolutely. It's, actually, how I met the guy, Phil Towle, who is a wonderful dude. He was a performance enhancement coach for the St. Louis Rams football team. You can put this in your notes and ask somebody else later about this. I'm a fan of the team. I spend a lot of time around the team, and I'd ask this guy like, "What's your job?" And he said, "Well, you know, a lot of times, what keeps you from winning the Super Bowl isn't the lack of your physical abilities, it's your mental ability to get it together and do the best you can." I thought, "You need to work with some rock bands because rock bands are screwed up in the head" and he came over and sort of helped Audioslave, but I think he very much helped Metallica.

Nardwuar: It's amazing. The unlikely sources; the St. Louis Rams, helped Metallica, and then *South Park* helps you, Tom Morello, meet Joe Strummer.

Tom: That's right.

Nardwuar: That's weird that *South Park* would be the person that would help, sort of like St. Louis Rams would help Metallica.

Tom: Now, what does *South Park* have in common with *Dukes of Hazzard*? I'll ask the questions.

Nardwuar: I'm not sure. What do they have in common?

Tom: At that recording session I drove up to it in my muscle car, which is very much like the muscle car in *Dukes of Hazzard*.



We sent a note signed,
“Love, Rage Against The
Machine.
Here's your doughnuts.”

Nardwuar: Which Joe Strummer loved!

Tom: He loved that car. He crawled around it. That's how we bonded. It was very nice.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much, Tom Morello. Anything else you want to add to the people out there at all?

Tom: This has been a very interesting interview and I thank you very much. I'll tell ya, I will add one thing. I was talking to some friends last night and we were wandering around Vancouver and I was thinking, "Man, you know what? One of the things that's difficult when you're a Tom Morello, political, rock musician and you run into thoughtful journalists all the time who are normally interviewing rockers or pop stars and they've got to come up with a different set of questions each time because they do a lot of those same kind of interviews. When you're the political rocker, every thoughtful journalist thinks of the same eight questions. Right? You just can't help it. So it's like a Rolodex. Card one, answer B." This has been a very thoughtful interview with completely

different questions and now I'd like my Paul Robeson record.

Nardwuar: Well, thank you very much there, Tom Morello. Why should people care about Tom Morello?

Tom: [laughs] That's a question they'll have to answer for themselves. I'm just going to do my best to continue sticking it to the man with my rock music and my folk music, and that's a dashing outfit you have on.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks so much Tom. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Tom: I'm not playing your little reindeer games.

Nardwuar: Almost!

Tom: [laughs]

Nardwuar: That's a good movie, too. Doot doola doot doo...

Tom: Help me.

To hear and see this interview visit
www.nardwuar.com



SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

"One more aspect of my youth shot to hell."

The Death of the Cereal Premiums

Since I'm slowly getting over my phobia of supermarkets, I've been occasionally going to the store with my wife on the weekly food romp. I can honestly say it's still not the greatest time of my life, but at least I've pulled back the reigns on being so critical of the dairy setups. I try to make the adventure something less frightful by spending more time in the cereal aisle. There's something about the many cereals that seem to excite and dull my senses all at once. I do have one giant complaint, though. What happened to the great premiums that they used to have—that were either buried deep in the grains and oats, or were available by simply sending away for them?

When I was a kid, I loved to help pick cereal for my mom based on what the hell was in the box. Who cared if the stuff tasted like cardboard zeros? The scolding I got for letting the stuff get stale could never compare to the Cheerios flyer I was tossing around in the backyard. I could also count on my brother, who was not as concerned with the magic of the prize, as much as he was the sugar content of any given cereal. Count Chocula, Franken Berry, and Boo Berry were his favorites. Pretty much anything that had marshmallows—or as Mr. Mackin has informed us "marbits"—were the favored breakfast feast.

Now, as for the premiums, as I remember, it was almost always something a kid loved to play with, usually outside the house, but it was something fun and usually mysterious. Decoder rings, magnifying glasses, 3-D glasses and the like were always the favorite because they could be used in secret societies and clubhouse meetings, and gave a kid the sense of being a secret agent. If there was anything for girls, and I'm sure there was, I don't remember them. Hell, even Matchbox and Hot Wheels cars would come in boxes of sweet, sugary heaven.

Our favorite was baseball cards, either inside or to be cut off from the panel. What marketing that was. We had to buy several boxes to get whole collections. The best and last great premium I remember getting was the Crazy, or maybe it's Quazy Quisp wristwatch. I sent what I remember to be about \$4.95 and received the coolest metal watch with the Quazy Quisp guy on the face. His arms rotated to tell the hour and minutes. He was some cartoon-looking alien with

antennae on his head. Most of the stuff that came out of the boxes had the trademark of the cereal so that we would always remember to tell mom to get that same cereal the next time she went shopping. Pretty clever, huh!

Let's get back to present day and look at the cereal aisle. Where did all the cool stuff go? There are no longer the cool toys that I enjoyed as a kid. There are no premiums that make kids adventurous! There are none that make kids wonder, think, or imagine! All there are, it seems, are movie collectibles. I bribed my wife to get Frosted Mini Wheats, which had a Star Trek badge-like communicator thing inside. I figured this thing was going to make some noise since it had one of those pull-tab battery things hanging out of the side of it, right? All it was, was a frickin' flashlight. I don't know if I would have liked this even if I was a kid, and I'm sure not going to keep buying boxes of Mini Wheats just to get a complete set of flashlights. So, as I searched up and down the aisle, I came to the conclusion that cereal manufacturers have lost touch with their biggest sales target: kids. How many parents are going to buy several boxes of a cereal so that their kids can have the complete set of six or seven tiny flashlights? It's not going to happen, especially at four or five dollars a box.

When I worked in a supermarket, the guy who represented Yoplait also did General Mills. When it really comes down to the finish, everything is owned by Pepsi-Co. That's kind of a joke! Anyway, this guy, we'll call him Bob, would bring real cool premiums in and hand them out. Bob gave me some General Mills work gloves, Matchbox cars, Christmas items, and the best were ink pens with some of the cereal characters on them. Why the hell aren't these things in the boxes of cereal? Maybe I should have asked Bob.

I guess what this tells us is that if there is no competition, there's no reason to bait the boxes with goodies. If this is the case, that means there's one more aspect of my youth shot to hell. That's all right though; I still have my Quazy Quisp wrist watch.

THE FAMOUS HAIRDOS OF POPULAR MUSIC

By ?, \$?

I really don't know what's going on in this book. By the title, I was thinking that it

would be a collection of cartoon drawings of musicians with an over emphasis on their hairdos, but I was wrong. This book is just page after grueling page of what I'm guessing is a photocopy of James Brown's hair pasted on drawings done by a kindergarten student. It is very much a waste of paper. Maybe that is why the creator wishes to remain anonymous. (Mail your hair: PO Box 11872, Milwaukee, WI 53211, thefamoushairdosofpopularmusic.blogspot.com)

TOXIC

By Scott Seekins & Lacey Prpic Hedtke, \$? Does *Toxic* make me want to hate Britney Spears more or feel sorry for her? Come on, do we really need to ask that question? I could never feel sorry for someone who makes big money being incredibly ass-like. This little book is just photocopies of Spears with quotes and questions. It seems like a waste of time.

GRAMHOLE #3

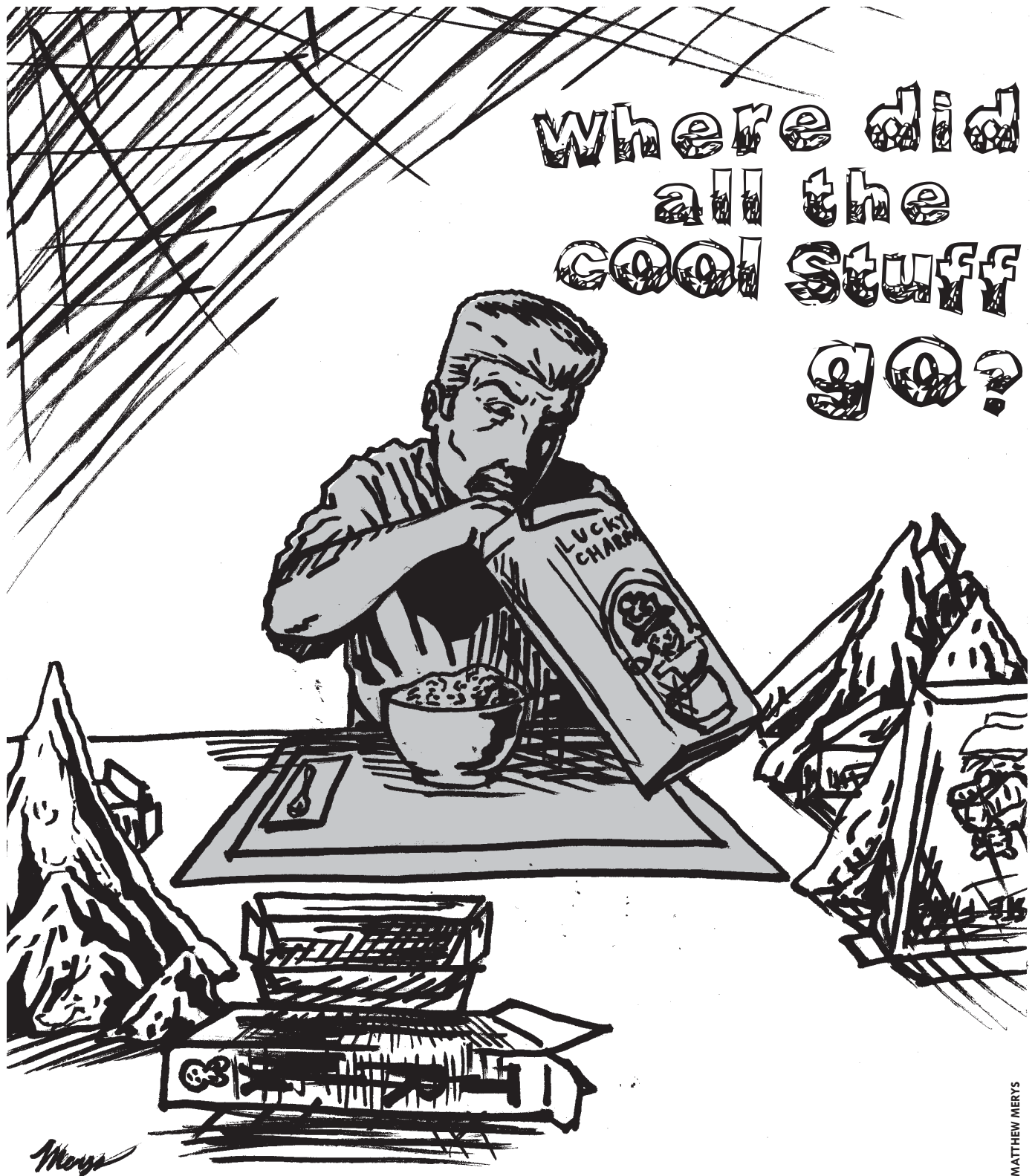
By Billups Allen, \$3.00 U.S.

I love *Cramhole*! I love *Cramhole*! I love *Cramhole*! This book is the best. If I wrote a book, it would be like *Cramhole* because we think a lot alike. The very first block has our character complaining about the closing of theaters, video stores, and record stores as he slowly appears to us as a dinosaur wearing a jacket. Now that's funny! This book is an aging punker's dream come true. I find myself in this guy's skin quite a bit. I can't help but laugh out loud at this guy's insight. *Cramhole* needs to be picked up by a big distributor so that everyone can enjoy the humor found within its pages. (Billups Allen, 2244 E, 17th St., Tucson, AZ 85719, www.billupsallen.com)

MANCHILD 4

By Brian Walsby

Manchild is a punk rocker's *Mad* magazine: drawn nice and crisp with lots of syntax. This one's like reading a textbook because the lettering is small and tight and there is lots of it. It is cool to see what has happened to all the punkers of the '80s and '90s. I personally am really bad with names, so when the writer wrote that he was in the band Scared Straight, I didn't put things together until I saw Scott



Radinsky's name, then everything came back. Thank goodness for baseball! At the start, we get a lot of info on all the bands the writer's been in, and, admittedly, it's tedious reading but history sometimes is. Towards the rear we get some more off-beat stories. I do like the section on worst jobs walked off, and was eager to see the job Tony Cadena walked off. This is one hell of a punk rock school notebook. (Bifocal Media, PO Box 50106. Raleigh, NC 27650, www.bifocalmedia.com)

SIDE B THE MUSIC LOVER'S COMIC ANTHOLOGY

A Collection of Writers, \$22.99 US

This is a very interesting look into how music affects people. In some ways, music touches people beautifully and, in other ways, it's almost morbid. Many of the stories express the definitive points in time when music stops the present and replays the past. It is also interesting that all types of musical tastes are expressed in the pages of this book. My favorite is on page

twenty-five where an elementary school kid, dressed as Gene Simmons, is giving a presentation on his love of metal and does one hell of a graphic presentation. My hat's off to the teacher for encouraging the kids. This is one great collection of comics relating to the love and influence of music. I'm sure if everyone were artistic, this book would be found in volumes. (www.poseurink.com)

—Gary Horenberger



A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**"The future,
like the present,
isn't binary."**

POP CULTURE PAP

I walked across the campus at UCLA a half hour before the hullabaloo was scheduled to begin. A middle-aged woman in Birkenstocks walked toward me, accompanied by a dog that looked like a fat greyhound. A squirrel darted through the planter to my left. The dog bounded off after the squirrel. The woman didn't have a tight enough hold on the leash. It slipped out of her hand. The squirrel made for a tree—his only hope. The dog took three steps, swooped the squirrel up in her mouth, and bam. Two shakes of her head and the squirrel's neck was broke. He hung there limply in the dog's mouth. The woman screamed, "No! Macy! Put it down!" But it was too late for the squirrel. Macy knew this. She took off running down the hallways of what looked to be a biology building. The woman ran after her dog.

It all seemed futile to me. She could give that dog all the yuppie names she wanted and scream at her all she wanted, but Macy had thousands of years of genetic memory telling her to eat that squirrel. Yuppie names and scolding in a language the dog doesn't speak are no match for that. I wanted to tell the woman, "Relax. Let the dog have her little squirrel. It's just the way the world works." Instead, I minded my own business. I thought to myself, this has to be a metaphor for something.

A half hour later, the hullabaloo ensued. Crowds filtered in, writers performed readings, panels of other writers talked about their books, publishers hawked their wares. The LA Times Festival of Books was underway. I set up a chair adjacent to the table of Gorsky Press books and let the festival wash over me.

I was working half of the Gorsky Press/Manic D Press booth. Jennifer from Manic D had asked me if I would split a booth with her. From about ten seconds after I said I'd do it, I regretted my decision. I hate working at book festivals. I hate the retail aspect of it. I hate having to give a sales pitch for a book that I'm selling for five bucks. I mean, come on, five bucks? What else can you get for five bucks? A burrito. Someone poured his heart and soul and years of his life into this book, I spent several months working with the author, editing, typesetting, designing the cover, and creating the actual artifact. And you can get it for the cost of a burrito. Don't ask me to give a sales pitch.

Thus, I started the day grumpy.

To make matters worse, the Gorsky/Manic D booth was right next to the LA Times Stage. This is where all the "celebrity" authors (or is it celebrity "authors," because you know Cloris Leachman didn't sit down at a laptop and type seventy thousand words of an autobiography) read from their works and answered questions from the audience. Whether I wanted to or not—and believe me, it was a not—I had to hear Winnie Cooper talk about math, Marsha Brady talk about her cocaine addiction (she bragged about blowing a quarter million dollars on coke, then scolded someone in the audience—probably some little girl—by braying, "Don't you ever do drugs. Drugs are bad!"), and a few different celebrities whom I'd never heard of whine about being recognized everywhere they went. Bob Barker was there. I'm not sure what he talked about, but I couldn't help feeling like he was trying to sell me a washing machine.

There's something hauntingly painful about giving a sales pitch to a customer who's clearly not interested in the book that you poured sweat and blood and thousands of dollars in, and giving that sales pitch not because you want to, but because he asked. And you know he only asked because he's killing time until the *Dancing with the Stars* host takes over the stage. And you can hardly hear yourself grumble to yourself because Tori Spelling is squawking through the P.A. behind you.

Our booth number was 666. Before the festival, a friend asked me if that was a coincidence. I didn't understand how it could be. I'm not satanic. After a seven-hour assault from the LA Times Stage, I knew what he meant. It was a coincidence because I was in hell.

Beyond the celebrities and customers, there were my fellow publishers to contend with. Not so much Jennifer from Manic D, but the publishers who stopped in to chat. The trendy fear this year is digital book readers. Publishers are convinced that everything will be going paperless within ten years. Books will be a thing of the past, surrendered in favor of the Kindle or the Sony Reader. And, as much as I like to indulge on unfounded panic, I just couldn't commiserate with my fellow publishers.

On the one hand, I could see the benefits of these digital readers, because everything

published before 1923 in the U.S. is part of the public domain in the U.S. No one holds the copyright on it. So, if I wanted to publish *Moby Dick* tomorrow, I could. And since Herman Melville's estate isn't going to get a dime, it doesn't make sense for Barnes & Noble or Penguin to charge as much as they do for their copies of that novel. You can get a free copy of it online at Project Gutenberg. So, if these digital readers became popular, anyone who wanted to read a pre-1923 book could download it for free. I think that would be a good thing. But you can already read most of those books for free online. And I still buy the books. Because *Moby Dick* is hard enough to read without having to read it off a glowing, flickering screen.

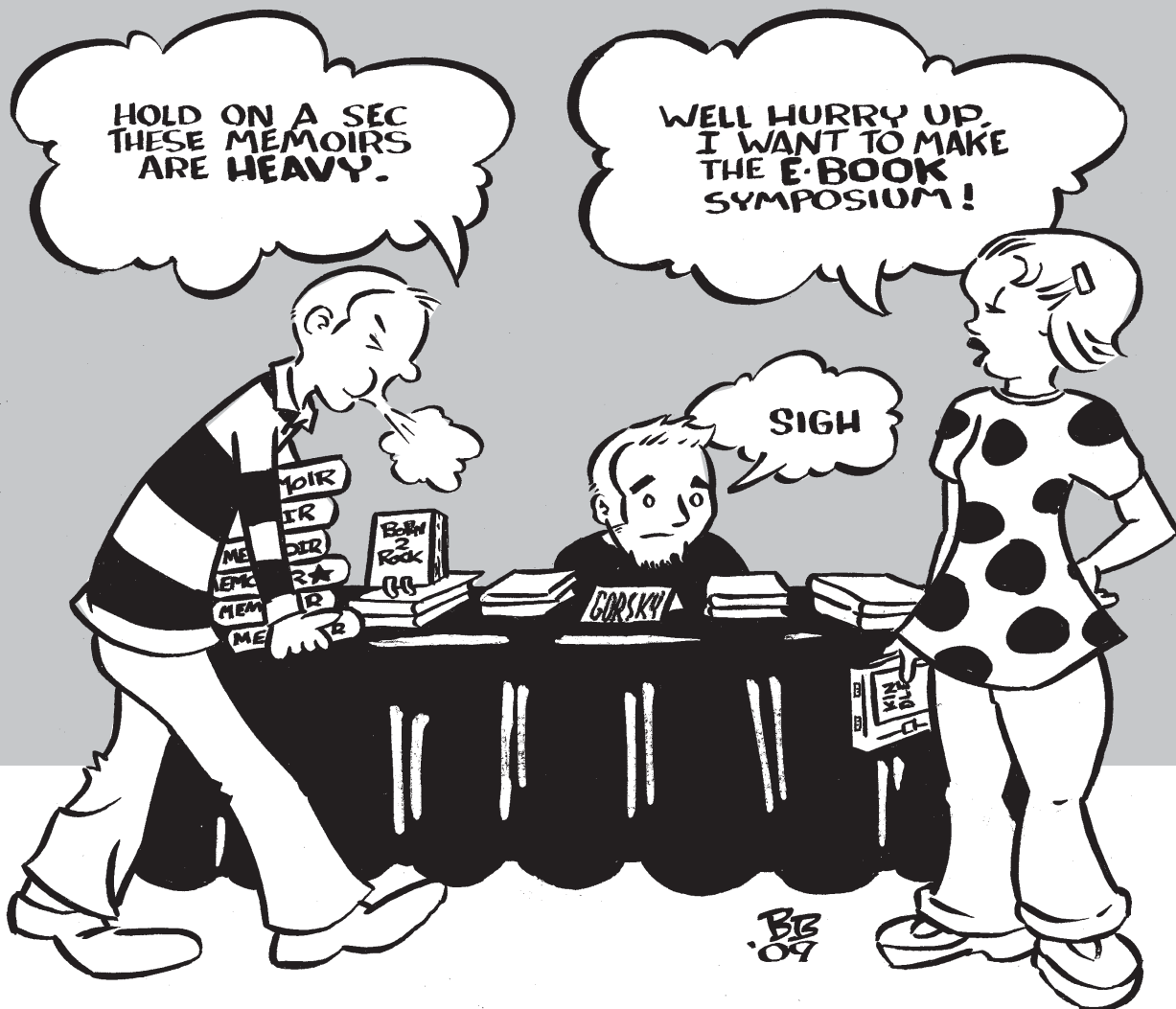
And that's the problem with these book readers. The manufacturers swear that the screens don't glow or flicker. But I've seen these readers. They glow and flicker.

Besides, if more people went to the digital book readers, I could sell a whole lot more Gorsky books without having to print, store, or mail them. And, sure, more people would be illegally downloading these books, but I could live with that. At least more people would be reading our authors.

On the other hand, I have trouble believing that these readers will take over. For one thing, I've never seen anyone using one of these digital readers in the world at large. I see a lot of people reading books down by the beach or on airplanes or in diners or on campuses, but I have not seen one single person reading a digital reader outside of the store that sells that reader. And I've been looking. For years, I've been looking.

When we started Gorsky Press more than a decade ago, people told me then that, within five years, everything would be paperless. Ten years later, people are telling me that, within five years, everything will be paperless. Will I hear the same thing in ten more years? I don't know. I do remember buying an LP back in 1984 and the clerk telling me that cassettes would make LPs a thing of the past. Twenty-five years later, the LP is more popular than its been in a decade.

This goes to show that the future, like the present, isn't binary. Sure, people probably will start buying more of those readers. Maybe they will get more popular. But for the rest of my lifetime, at least, people will still buy books for the same reason people still buy records. We want the artifact. We want the ceremony of lifting the record onto



BRAD BESHAW

NOTHING BUGS PEOPLE LIKE MIXING YOUR REASON IN WITH THEIR PANIC.

the turntable, hearing the crack and pop of anticipation, and listening to that warm fuzz of analog. Likewise, when we read a book, we want to be able to pause with our thoughts, gaze at the cover, flip back through the pages. We want to dog-ear pages and underline beautiful sentences. We want to smell the musty pages of a book that we've read twenty years ago, and reread that book and let the smell and the browning pages connect us to our earlier selves. I can't see myself giving that up for a glowing screen. I can't see readers like me giving that up for the next fifty or sixty years, at least.

Of course, I didn't tell my fellow publishers this. Nothing bugs people like mixing your reason in with their panic.

So, that was the LA Times Festival of Books. Vacuous celebrities, whiny publishers in a retail purgatory, and me grumbling. But there was this beautiful moment, too.

With only a couple of hours left in the book fest, with another celebrity chattering away on the stage behind me, I left the

Gorsky/Manic D booth, made my way across campus, and watched a reading sponsored by an organization called "Dime Stories." Aspiring-but-little-known writers read three-minute, slice-of-life stories about commuting on public transportation and thinking about their aunt and that kind of thing. I watched five or six of them. They were at times funny, clever, and thoughtful. All of these writers, though, clearly spent a lot of time crafting these little three-minute stories. They thought about every word. It was big deal for them to read at the Festival of Books.

The crowd was bigger there than it had been at the celebrity stage when I left. I was happy to see that.

Twenty minutes into Dime Stories, who should take the stage but Razorcake's own Jim Ruland. He read a twisted story about a guy obsessed with Nietzsche and pro sports. It got a little edgy at the end. Some spectators who'd brought their young children squirmed in their seats. I felt a little swelling in my chest, proud for ol' Jim.

Was his reading so powerful, so beautiful that it vindicated my whole experience at the Festival of Books? No. Clearly, I'm still grumpy about it all. I was just glad to see that among this vacuous display of a culture in ruins that passes itself off as a Festival of Books, at this homage to pop cultural pap where honest attempts at communication are lost in the clutter, at least organizations like Razorcake, Gorsky, and Manic D still have a foothold.

When the hullabaloo subsided, I packed the unsold books back into my truck and thought about the dog and her squirrel. I tried to make sense of the metaphor. Who was the dog in this scenario? Who was the squirrel? What were we genetically programmed to do? How was nature running its course?

I still don't know. I'm sorry.

I wish I had a better answer for you.

—Sean Carswell

D~M~R



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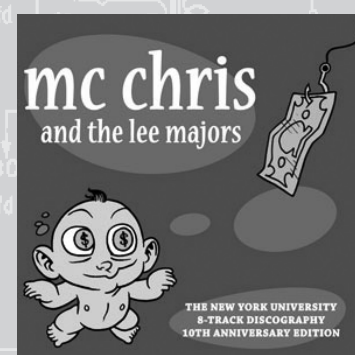
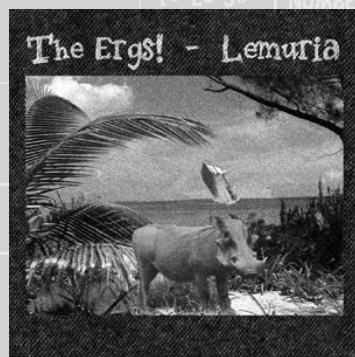
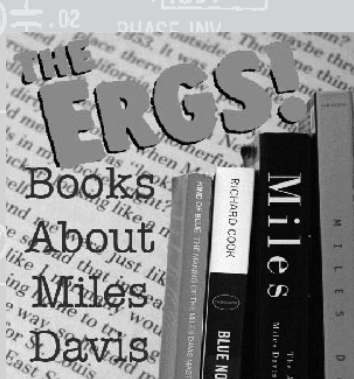
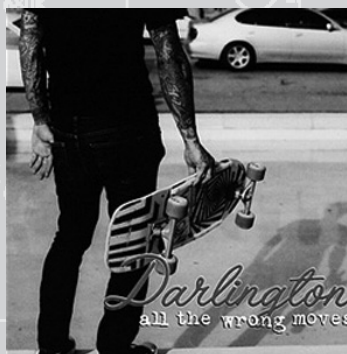
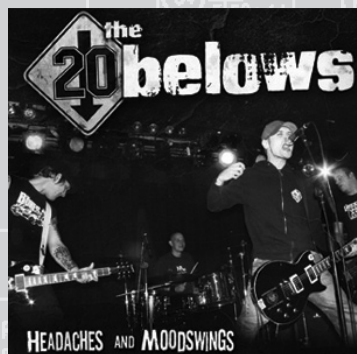


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Whoa Oh Records



It's four-fifteen in the morning, and I'm walking around downtown Manhattan with Jon Vafiadis, mastermind behind Whoa Oh Records. Its turned into an unexpectedly long night, and we're finally making our way towards the subway back to Queens when he stops and informs me, "We're going into this place to get some falafel." I start to protest, trying to argue that it's late, I'm tired, and not

even hungry, but it's too late, and I'm already inside. In just a brief moment, Jon's not only placed and paid for our orders, but also recruited the other three people inside to all join in saying "Of course you want a falafel!" I bring this up because it's a reminder that Jon is a man who knows what he wants and gets it. And that's what he does when it comes to his label. He has taken it a

step beyond just putting out records he likes by making it a point to do everything he can to help out the bands he works with. Now—I'll be honest—Jon's not only a bandmate, but a part-time employer, as well as good friend, so while it's possible some of this may seem biased, I like to think that I've had a firsthand look at those kind of efforts that are often overlooked.

Interview by Joe Evans III
Photos provided by Jon Vafiadis

Joe: So, in a nice accomplishment, the label recently broke even and is now completely out of debt, correct?

Jon: Getting back to the point where the label doesn't owe anything to any one—outside of a little bit to me, personally—has been a major coup. Around 2003, I decided that I wasn't going to put any more money out of my pocket into the label in an effort to make it self-sustaining and to motivate myself to work harder. My logic was if there was a large amount of debt, that would be terrifying, and I would do everything in my power to pay off American Express. I'd say that the majority of the releases have come since I put this plan to action, so with that, it's been a huge burden off my shoulders. I'd assume it's like when someone pays off their mortgage. I don't know what it means for the future of the label outside of not having to pay astronomical interest fees. In theory, there would be more releases as a result. It also probably means more sales and discounts, but since I'm only minorly

clairvoyant I don't know what the future holds. **Joe:** Explain the predatory practices of credit card companies and what you did, specifically, to get out from under their thumb.

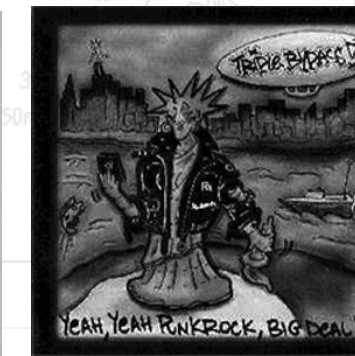
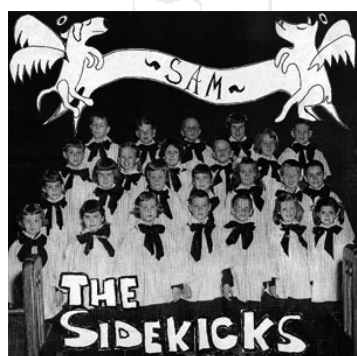
Jon: I basically floated the label on American Express for years. At points, the interest charges were coming to almost three hundred dollars a month, which is painful when you are selling CDs at ten dollars and wholesaling them at six or seven dollars, and you have to pay bands out of those sales. If you think about it, two to three hundred dollars a month in interest over the course of a year is a release or two, if not three. I worked down the debt by keeping costs as low as possible on every release, and I looked at the strengths of the label and planned accordingly. Since I had over twenty releases, I was able to do some bundles or wholesale the older releases for a lot less to keep the cash flowing, and by flowing I mean directly to Amex. The digital stuff like iTunes always helps, too, because it's basically free money. There's no real cost, no shipping, no nothing.

Joe: You've expressed that your family is important to you. Do you feel like that's

something that translates over to the label as well?

Jon: Family and friends are of the utmost importance. I was lucky growing up, in that I had and still have a large support structure, which I'm eternally grateful for. By extension, I've always tried to make the label similar in the sense that it's about helping bands get the recognition that I feel they deserve. I try to put the bands' needs above the label's needs because they are the ones creating the music. I don't know if I'm expressing this as clearly as it is in my head, so here's the best example I can think of. The Ergs! were about to record their second album and I said I didn't want to do it because they deserved and had offers from bigger and better labels who could help them more than I could. What also ends up happening is the bands you go to see all time and that you work with become your friends and, eventually, like family, so is it worth it to screw over your family for maybe a couple of bucks? I subscribe to the philosophy that money comes and goes, but friends stick around forever.

Joe: How about the importance of Astoria, Queens?



Is it worth it to screw over your family for maybe a couple of bucks? I subscribe to the philosophy that money comes and goes, but friends stick around forever.

Jon: I grew up and spent all my time in my formative years mainly around Astoria. Its had a huge influence on me from its multiculturalism, to its closeness to Manhattan, to its variety. I feel like you should take pride in your neighborhood because it does help shape you. Matt Army (of Dick Army) has a good quote, "Don't trust anyone who doesn't root for the sports team from the area they grew up in."

Joe: What first got you into music?

Jon: Music wasn't a big part of growing up. My mom would put on the oldies station on Saturdays, which were cleaning days. That's where I heard and loved The Beach Boys and The Beatles. My uncle, who is more of a big brother to me, was big into dance, house, and hip hop, so I would listen to TKA, Clivilles and Cole, Black Sheep, and stuff like that before I really got into rock and then punk. The first band to proverbially pop my cherry was Pearl Jam. I was twelve. It was Halloween and I borrowed *Vs* and *Ten* from one of my uncle's friends. I have a fond memory of getting home, borrowing my uncle's CD player, and putting on *Ten* as I was getting ready to fall asleep. It was an eye-opening experience, because it was the first band that I heard that had a little more weight to their lyrics outside of the dance and even radio pop songs that I was surrounded by at the time. It made me realize that songs could have more power than just getting a hook stuck in your head.

Joe: How about the New York City pop punk scene specifically?

Jon: We didn't really know there was a New York City pop punk scene when we were teenagers. We had submitted our then-band to be listed in *Book Your Own Fucking Life*, which is a collection of different bands, labels, radio shows, and more broken down by state. When it came out, we looked through the New York section and found another pop punk band from Astoria, which was surprising since we thought we knew all the bands from Astoria and they were all hardcore bands. I still remember their listing, "Book us, fucko! We'll play your basement and help your mom clean up afterwards." Egghead. We decided to write them and ended up meeting Mike Faloon (also of *Go Metric* zine) for pizza. That was my first introduction to a New York scene that wasn't hardcore. For those who don't know, New York City was not really a pop punk town in the mid-'90s. Anyway, around the same time

we started getting into Mutant Pop Records and Tim (Chandler) was doing 7"s for Dirt Bike Annie and the Kung Fu Monkeys, both from here. Around the same time, some way, somehow, I befriended George Tabb and there was a double 7" release party show for Dirt Bike Annie's *Chocoberries* and the Kung Fu Monkey's *Summer School*, with Furious George, The Hissysfits, and The In-Crowd. That was a real watershed show for me because it opened up my eyes that there was something great going on in New York and wasn't all hardcore bands and waiting for bands to come through on tour.

Joe: Would you say you have a trend of typically working with younger bands?

Jon: I prefer working with newer bands. In particular, I love doing a band's first release. I like the band's excitement and anticipation about seeing themselves in print for the first time. There's something a little more special in that. That's not to say that I don't like working with established bands; it just means a little more to be someone's first.... Yes, that was a virgin joke.

Joe: You spend a lot of time doing label work, even though it isn't your source of income. Does that get overwhelming?

Jon: I've found that the label stuff is pretty manageable within the scheme of "normal" work on a day-to-day basis. It gets hectic when new releases come and you have to do all the promo work, like sending out copies for review, creating ads, spamming the internet, plus mailing copies to a bunch of different distros and the individual orders that come in. Those occasions are, unfortunately, few and far between by day-to-day and other labels' standards. So I've never really had any problem dealing with both, but maybe I'm just awesome at time management.

Joe: What's your "real" job?

Jon: After being a brutal victim of nepotism, I parlayed a temporary summer job organizing files and stacking things into a full-time environmental consulting gig. It's pretty jobby by most standards, but I was called on by New York City bureaucracy to be a first responder for Ground Zero after September 11th. We got a police escort downtown through three checkpoints down Broadway, one of the busiest streets in New York, which was so devoid of people that it felt post-apocalyptic. I ended up about fifty feet from the pile, and I wrote some of the reports on the air quality. That was exciting amidst a whirlwind of emotions,

but outside of that, it's really reports, samples, and time sheets.

Joe: Did you go to college to study business?

Jon: I did go to business school as an undergrad, and maybe one day I can take the plunge and go for my MBA. I learned a lot about entrepreneurialism, general marketing ideas, and pitfalls that other companies have faced through case studies and presentations. I ended up taking classes in how people think, see, and are affected by products. One big thing I remember is that a satisfied customer tells two to three people and an unsatisfied one tells six to eight. So I've always tried to keep people happy. That—mixed with my own immediate gratification wants—is why the overwhelming majority of orders go out the next day.

Joe: How would you compare the "sound" of the label to your own personal listening habits?

Jon: I like to say that the label is a pop punk label, but I don't know if that's true, I've always thought of it more along the lines of a bunch of stuff I like for different reasons. I don't think the label has a sound, but maybe that's because when I think of labels having "sounds," all the bands are going to sound exactly the same, and I don't think that's the case with Whoa Oh. I mean, The Unlovables and Charlie Brown Gets A Valentine don't sound the same. The Ergs! and the Zatopeks don't sound the same. Tin Armor and The Sidekicks don't sound the same. Lemuria and Full Of Fancy do kinda sound the same.

Joe: With an expansion of the label's sound, do you ever conscientiously think, "Don't pull a Lookout! Records. Don't turn completely away from pop punk?"

Jon: Wow, that's something that I had never thought of and now that it's mentioned, I do feel like I pulled a little bit of a Lookout! I haven't given up on pop punk, but the latest few releases have been different and slightly more indie. It's something that I'm going to be more aware of going forward if the label continues. This question, plus my changing tastes, has just completely changed my opinion of Lookout! Let me qualify that. It has completely changed my opinion of Lookout! in their release choices, not their in paying bands and how they operated.

Joe: Was the label name meant as foreshadowing of the focus on pop punk?

Jon: The label name was a lucky decision that I made when I was eighteen. I didn't think far enough ahead to realize that it would be as fitting or important to me, as it



**above left: Dirtbike Annie. above: The Unlovables
below left: The Ergs (photo by Todd Taylor).
below: Jon Vafiadis of Whoa Oh Records.**



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three people and an unsatisfied one
tells six to eight.**

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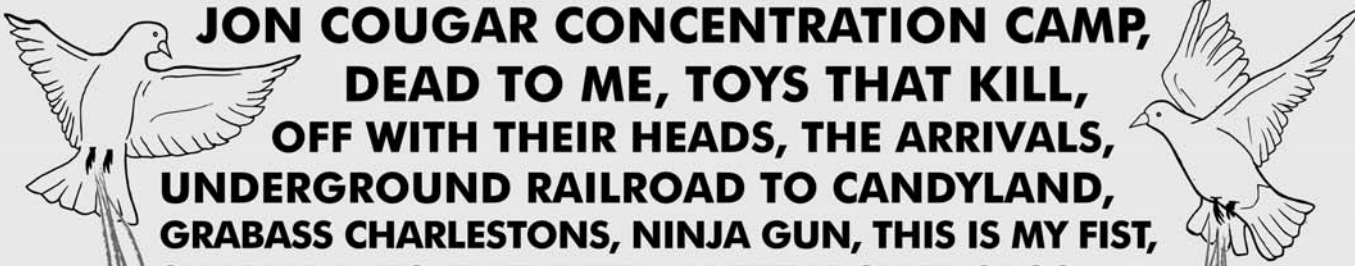
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TOO MANY DAVES, AUDACITY, THEE MAKEOUT
PARTY, LOVE SONGS, WHITE NIGHT,
RUMSPRINGER, GIT SOME, REST OF US,
READY THE JET, THE DAMAGE DONE,
SUCCESS, YOUNG OFFENDERS, RE-VOLTS,
BUMBKLAATT, FOR THE WIN, BEHIND
THE WAGON, BITCHIN SUMMER,
THE MAXIES, UH OH!
...AND MANY MORE!**



Business co-exists with punk if you alter the general principles to be about art or people rather than just a bottom line and making as much money as possible for yourself.

would be. I had it down to two names before the first release, the Triple Bypass CD: Whoa Oh and TBP Records. At that point, I didn't know how seriously I was going to take the label and if it would be a label that did things besides records by the band I was in at the time. That's why TBP was in contention. I ended up just liking Whoa Oh better as a name, even though I knew it would be misspelled all the time. Honestly, it was one of the best and luckiest decisions I've made.

Joe: What was the first not-your-band record and what made you decide to take that leap?

Jon: The first not-my-band was the Pettyfords from Hawaii. I had known Jeremy from the Mutant Pop message board. He sent me an email asking if I wanted a 7", to which I replied, "Yes," and he replied with, "Send me three dollars." I figured I'd make his day and sent the money. The 7" was pretty good: straight-forward pop punk up until the last song which, for some reason, hit me. It was more than just a standard, three-chord pop punk song. It had that certain something that makes a band stand out. What that indescribable thing was, I can't say. It's just there for some bands. From there we continued to talk. What pushed it over the edge was a mix of Timbo—who was taking about ten copies of my stuff—publicly asking an additional fifty Pettyfords 7"s. It sparked my decision to take the label more seriously and start releasing other bands' music.

Joe: How did you get involved with the charity group New York Cares?

Jon: I've been involved with New York Cares for about four years now through NYU. Last year, the school decided that they weren't going to do any more alumni groups to help with the charity work that New York Cares does. I got the idea to put together a group under the Whoa Oh banner to help with various events that they run throughout the year. I feel that a label's job is to give to bands and to the scene, so the natural next step would be to help the community around it. More recently, the label held a coat drive for the homeless, and then a group got together to help sort the coats that New York Cares collected. In a few hours, we were able to sort over 2,100 coats, which were given out to different shelters, churches, and other locations where they would be given directly to the homeless.

Joe: What would you say your ultimate goals are?

Jon: At this point, I've probably done more than I've ever expected with the label. Twenty-five releases, it's out of debt, and everything that I'd like to be in print is still in print. With something that you are doing mainly for fun, I think it's best not to have big, long-term goals, but to be more focused on the more immediate and achievable goals. I guess my ultimate goal would be to have everything go out of print mainly so I could have more closet space in my apartment.

Joe: You've described yourself as having a preference of, "Quality over cheap." How

would you describe the quality put into your releases?

Jon: I've felt that it's best to wait a little longer and get something done the right way than giving into your impatience and just do it immediately to get it over with. I learned that from recording. If it bothers you now, in six months it's going to be unlistenable. That's why I've tried to get every release to sound and look as good as possible, but, at the same time, it's what the band wants. Those releases are representative of the label. If they look like shit, it makes you wonder how the business is being run.

Joe: Do you feel like punk rock and "traditional" business can co-exist?

Jon: Business is everywhere and it exists everywhere. It doesn't have to be the in traditional profit/loss projections, spreadsheets, and stockholders sense but more along the lines of things that generate revenue and how that revenue is used. First, reject the idea that the goal of business is to maximize profit. Instead, it's to help people with the revenue that is generated. Think about it as making enough to put out another release, or enough to help a band to fund another tour. If the business idea is to put out as many releases as possible, taking the profit out of the label doesn't help reach that goal. So, really, business co-exists with punk and just about everything else if you alter the general principles to be about art or people rather than just a bottom line and making as much money as possible for yourself. Too many small labels, in particular, feel like they've failed because they never turned a profit, when, in actuality, they have done the world a service by helping spread art to as many people as they could. That level of helping people is what punk rock has always been to me.

Joe: How did you almost end up joining the Wynonna Ryders?

Jon: The word *almost* needs to be in the sarcasm font. Back in late 2002, I got an email from Skip from the Wynonna Ryders that he had moved to New York and he was looking for a bass player, a drummer, and a guitarist for a new project. The funny thing is that I had never spoken to him before that. I asked Chris Grivet and Chadd Derkins—both of whom I was in the Shy Guys with and we had

just broken up—if they'd be interested. In the mean time, I told Skip that I'd be down and I'm waiting to hear back from a drummer and a guitarist. He wrote me back saying, "Great! Here's what I'm thinking. One of you will be in an English school boy's outfit, the other in suit, and I forget the third costume." I wrote him telling him that the three of us were in but we'd like to pass on the costumes, and I never heard from him again. The slight irony is now I play in the Lost Locker Combo where I wear a school uniform to every show and practice.

Joe: What's the best, most unexpected "happy accident" that the label has gone through—something completely unexpected, but really helped out?

Jon: I had sent the master and the art files for *3 Guys, 12 Eyes* to the pressing plant with a note saying if the record fits on a 45, let's go with that, but if it has to be a 33 1/3, then so be it, but here are art files for both. Well, the plant ignored the note completely and ran with 33 1/3 art file because it was the first file numerically. The record ended up fitting on a 45. So the label said 33 1/3, but it was really a 45. I called the plant and they apologized profusely and assured me that they would send out another five hundred records with the proper 45 label and that I should destroy the five hundred records with the 33 1/3 label. I didn't. Instead I got five hundred free Ergs 7"s.

Joe: What about the worst mistake you made when doing the label?

Jon: I'd say either that I didn't push it hard enough or grow it at the same pace as some of the bands grew, or pressing too many copies of things. Neither are huge regrets, but I think they'd all arrive at me having more space in my apartment.

Joe: What's the best advice you can give to someone thinking about starting up a DIY record company tomorrow?

Jon: I strongly recommend that you are committed and to remember that it's the band's name on the front cover. You are on the back cover for a reason. By that, I mean the band always comes first, and you have to respect that. It's easy to put things off because they aren't any fun, but they are still necessary and you are working for the band.



COBRA SKULLS

INTERVIEW BY MR. Z
PHOTOS BY JEFF EVRARD
LAYOUT BY ALBERT LAM

Prior to the release of *Sitting Army* on Red Scare Industries, I had never heard of Cobra Skulls, but, as soon as the disc hit my CD player, I felt like I was listening to an album created by long-time friends. They incorporate all of my favorite elements of punk rock with the tongue-in-cheek political lyrics you come to expect from bands like Randy and Propagandhi. Associated with Red Scare is flawless recording quality and some sort of poppy goodness. Cobra Skulls don't necessarily wave the pop punk flag, though. Their flag is a quilt made up of crust, rockabilly, folk, West Coast punk rock meets Florida beard punk, and don't forget the little patch that represents Specials-style ska. What follows is the conversation I had with Devin, the singer/ringleader for this band of deadly cobras. We covered topics like the recording of their new album, blasphemous Danish cartoons, and ACLU-inspired songs, among other things.

Mr. Z: I know you're of Argentine blood. Were you born in the U.S.?

Devin: I was born in Corona Del Mar, CA, but half of my family, on my Dad's side, is in Argentina and I have visited many times. I guess you could say I've lived in Buenos Aires for a total of a year.

Mr. Z: Corona Del Mar? Is that why you have such a hatred for Southern California?

Devin: [laughs] Well, sort of. I am also a sixth generation Californian on my mom's side. I'm pretty interested in my family history. My great-great-grandfather was William Mulholland, the chief engineer of Los Angeles during five mayors and he made the L.A. aqueduct. But, yeah, I hate urban sprawl and the way SoCal builds without regard for limited resources.

Mr. Z: When was the last time you were in Argentina?

Devin: Two years ago, for a month.

Mr. Z: Not too long ago, that's nice. And I assume you enjoy your stay there?

Devin: Yes! I love it there. It's always good to see my family. It's also really cheap and I love soccer, so I always enjoy myself and try to go

to as many games as possible.

Mr. Z: Do you think the people who make it their lifelong home love it as well?

Devin: There are comfortable and uncomfortable people in every country, but I think the Argentine people are pretty happy, in general.

Mr. Z: Why did your dad leave?

Devin: My dad left because he was a dreamer and watched too many Hollywood movies.

Mr. Z: [laughs] Did he see his dreams come true?

Devin: Well, yes actually. He arrived with fifty bucks in his pocket, started working as a dishwasher in a hotel in L.A., and then ended up owning three restaurants in Hollywood, Studio City, and Laurel Canyon.

Mr. Z: That's actually really refreshing to hear! Now, which one of you used to work for the American Civil Liberties Union?

Devin: I worked for the ACLU for about three months in San Francisco almost two years ago.

Mr. Z: How was that? What did you do for their organization?

Devin: It was hard, but I am really proud of doing it. I canvassed door



I don't really like the term
anti-establishment.
I don't really believe in it.
I mean, I think we need to
establish things.



If Muslims looked like Swedes, I think our country would look

to door and stood on street corners. I was that guy with whom everyone tried to avoid eye contact.

Mr. Z: Three months of being the guy no one wants to talk to! Wow.

Devin: Yeah, but it wasn't so bad. San Francisco has the highest percentage of ACLU members in the country and is pretty progressive. We signed up a lot of new members, and I'm proud of being able to help do that.

Mr. Z: That is definitely a great life experience!

Devin: Two songs on the new album deal with my time at the ACLU, so I guess I got some songwriting material out of it.

Mr. Z: That is pretty sweet if you think about it! Okay, now, what does your album title, *Draw Muhammad*, mean to you, and what is it supposed to mean for your fans?

Devin: It goes back to the Danish cartoons published in the editorial section of one of their respected newspapers in 2005 that depicted the Islamic prophet Muhammad, which led to violent protests all around the world. *South Park* did an episode regarding the issue, too. First of all, I am an atheist, and I hold the first amendment very dear to my heart. I don't think anyone should censor themselves or anyone else. I don't see a problem with drawing a picture. After the Danish cartoons came out and Muslims became violent over it, it was like everyone in America went, "Well, you should definitely respect peoples' beliefs. Drawing Muhammad is bad." I thought, "Are you fucking kidding me? Who are we to defend Islam?" I thought it was pretty outrageous that we would be invading a Muslim country and then be protective of their "laws." It's like, Americans were willing to give up their rights to Homeland Security, but at the same

time make those rights available to people (Iraqis) who don't want those rights. My goal was not to offend Muslims. I understand that some Muslims would be offended, but my point was to show how hypocritical Americans were being at the time.

Mr. Z: [laughs] The reason I laugh is because I thought just the opposite when the situation went down. To me, it seemed like everyone in the country held your view on the subject matter: What's the big deal with a drawing? I, myself, think it was completely silly and outrageous for the entire Muslim world to react violently, but at the same time, the only reason to draw Muhammad would be to insult someone. The only rule they have with the dude is that he must never be represented in art. And that's the rule they went and broke. With a contest, no less!

Devin: Well, I understand why they have the law. False idols are not to be worshipped. I mean you go into Christian churches and they are full of images of people, but I've been in many mosques and there are no images of any people in them, because you are not to worship images. I think Islamophobia is a serious problem in this country and that it must be very difficult being Muslim. It would be hard to even be Muslim-looking or look like you're from the Middle East.

If Muslims looked like Swedes, I think our country would look at the Middle East like it looks at Utah. Muslims are an easy target. Sikhs have been murdered in Arizona because some rednecks thought they were Muslims. Unfortunately, I think that some people might look at our CD and think, "Wow, what insensitive pricks. Just spreading hate for Muslims." I really hope people don't think that. I don't want

Muslims to feel like we're singling them out. I mean, the first lyrics on that EP is "I don't Fuck with Your Bible, Don't Fuck My Constitution." I think that most of the people in the world want peace, or are peaceful, but, unfortunately, they believe in things that I think are literally insane. People should have the right to believe what they want, but if your beliefs lead you to kill someone for drawing a picture or leads your "president" into thinking that "god" wants us to invade the most critical city in the Muslim world, Baghdad, I can't be tolerant of those beliefs. I must be critical. Unfortunately, when you are critical, you hurt people's feelings. But I'd rather be a prick than a killer.

Mr. Z: So you were trying to point out the hypocrisy of U.S. foreign policy, not really taking sides with or against the Danish newspapers?

Devin: Right, I mean, who am I to criticize the Danish? We played in Denmark and everyone was really nice. I know a lot of Americans, though, and a lot of them are culturally isolationistic bastards. Also, it's literally impossible to "draw Muhammad," if you think about it. I mean, if no one has been able to draw him, then how the hell does anyone know what he looks like? I just drew a picture from a photo of one of the Saudi Royal family. Technically, I did not draw Muhammad, but the mind sees what it wants to see.

Mr. Z: [laughs] You better hope none of the die-hard fanatics read this magazine! That's proof right there that you're the one who drew the one in your artwork!

Devin: [laughs] I know. I wonder how much I will be able to sell it for in the future, assuming I don't get whacked.



at the Middle East like it looks at Utah.

Mr. Z: Funny. Is anyone in the band religious?

Devin: Actually, no. Chad was raised Catholic, but we talk openly about how religion is obsolete. My dad is Catholic, too, and it hurts our parents to think that we don't believe in god, but they still love us, and we still love them, which is all that matters to me.

Mr. Z: Beautifully said.

Devin: [laughs] I might point out that I think one of the worst things that any society could do is to ban religion.

Mr. Z: So you are anti-religion, but against countries who ban religion?

Devin: Yes! Wait. Are there any countries that ban religion?

Mr. Z: China!

Devin: Oh, yeah. That's right. Well, I have my own problems with China, but that's not one of them.

Mr. Z: [laughs] Which brings me to another point. Your lyrics are also very political—in some ways, very straight forward and other times very tongue-in-cheek. Would you consider yourselves anti-establishment or simply very liberal?

Devin: I don't really like the term anti-establishment. I don't really believe in it. I mean, I think we need to establish things, so I guess I would say I think of our ideals as progressive. Liberal has such negative connotations these days and that pisses me off.

Mr. Z: I couldn't agree more. As far as leaders and politicians go, you got any dirt on Cristina Elisabet Fernández de Kirchner, the president of Argentina?

Devin: [laughs] To tell the truth, I know more about Carlos Menem who was president of Argentina for two terms in the '90s. He was pretty corrupt. He messed with

the value of the Argentine peso and pardoned criminals that were a part of the old dictatorship. He was charged for embezzling and took millions of dollars in bribes, though that hasn't been officially proven. He was held under house arrest for a period of time not too long ago. But, with regards to Mrs. Kirchner, from what I've read and from what my dad tells me, she isn't doing too bad of a job.

Mr. Z: How did the Andrew Jackson Jihad split 7" come into being?

Devin: Virgil (Suburban Home/Vinyl Collective) wrote us and asked us if we would do a song for the series with AJJ (Suburban Home/Vinyl Collective's *Under the Influence 7"* series is where they ask some bands to cover songs that have influenced their songwriting, and features bands such as Lemuria, Off With Their Heads, and Teenage Bottlerocket). I was really stoked and asked him myself how the pairing came up. He said that Sean (from AJJ) had asked him about doing a split with

Bomb The Music Industry or Cobra Skulls, and since BTMI had already signed on with Mustard Plug, Sean and Ben had to settle with us. Bummer, if you ask me. BTMI are way better!

Mr. Z: [laughs]. How nice that they asked for you by name! Even as a runner up, that's cool! So, what benefits do you get from Red Scare that you wouldn't get from self-releasing your own records?

Devin: Well, I think that punk rock nerds have brand loyalty like none other, so if we release our stuff on Red Scare, and they are a fan of Teenage Bottlerocket, then maybe they'll pick up our album. I guess that's good, but then a lot of people who like Bottlerocket may hate Cobra Skulls. Mainly, though, I think that the best thing about being on Red Scare is that Toby knows everyone in punk rock and a few bands like Mad Caddies and Against Me! have taken us on tour just because Toby suggested us. Actually, I've come to find that Toby has quite a few enemies, too, so I could be totally wrong.

Mr. Z: [laughs] Will every single thing in your discography have the word "Cobra" somewhere in the song titles?

Devin: Actually, *Sitting Army* was the only release that had all songs with "Cobra" in them. The new album has only one, and it's called "I Used to Like Them When Their Songs Had Cobra in the Title."

Mr. Z: Nice. Even a 7" has a Cobra title. Right?

Devin: Yeah, just *Cobralectric*.

Mr. Z: Can you tell our readers the story behind your song, "Honorable Discharge Under the Influence"?

Devin: Damn you, Toby! Leaking shit! [laughs] Sure thing. Here goes. I was doing my thing for the ACLU in the Sunset District

of San Francisco. I was standing in front of Starbucks, a magnet for liberal yokels. My line to get people to stop was, "Would you like to help stop President Bush and his abuse of power?" Then this guy my age stood up and asked what it was all about. He ended up telling me that he was a Marine in Iraq. He had been serving his second tour of duty and decided that the war was bullshit, and that we were just over there for oil as he was just patrolling oil pipelines. So, he drank four beers—just enough to be over the limit, for sure—and then drove a Humvee around the desert until a superior pulled him over. He got a DUI, an honorable discharge, and was able to keep his G.I. bill for college, which was the only reason he joined in the first place.

Mr. Z: He got to keep his college money? That's awesome! So he was hanging out with liberal yokels?

Devin: Yeah! And he did not have to serve his third tour, which is what he really wanted to avoid!

Mr. Z: Nice! All right, what about "The Cobra and the Man-Whore"?

Devin: That's about Ted Haggard. He was the President of the National Evangelicals of America and held weekly telephone conferences with W. to help set their conservative agenda and rob homosexuals of their rights. Then he was exposed for having an affair with a male prostitute in Denver, from whom he also bought meth. Religious hypocrite! Who could have guessed?

Mr. Z: You guys still based out of Reno?

Devin: Actually, we had to move to San Fran a couple years ago to keep the band together. Then we moved out of San Fran last summer because we went on tour for four months straight and could not afford rent there anyway. We have been living with our parents since mid-December, but we are moving back to Reno the month after we record. Reno is scummy and charming. There is a little black, festering, soft spot in my heart where I hold Reno dear to me. It's where we started as a band while going to UNR (University of Nevada, Reno).

Mr. Z: You guys melt a lot of different kinds of music into your songs, from rockabilly to country to ska. What kind of music do your fans think you play?

Devin: Well, first of all, when we started, we could barely play. I mean, Chad had never even played drums. It was his brother's drum set, and we said he should take it so we could play together. I had a few songs that I had originally written for my band in high school. So when we started out, we played really slow because it was all we could do, and if you can somehow find "Eat Your Babies," you will hear it. We sounded like some crusty oi punk band, but, now, I don't know. People have said we sound like everything from Misfits and Against Me! to Pennywise and the Proclaimers or even Smogtown. I have never even heard Smogtown to this day, but someone told me I should check them out, which I probably will after I get a lot of shit from people for admitting that.



tiltWHEEL

PART II

To me, music is much more than notes played in a sequence. It's people.

Perhaps this is a faulty way of listening. Maybe this limits my musical scope, but I personally know members of many of my favorite bands. Is it my knowing them that increases my enjoyment of music that—more than anything—is roundly ignored by others? Is it that I have such a protective aversion against multi-million dollar corporations that just happen to have music subsidiaries tacked onto their carcasses? (The same goes for independents that adopt major mindsets and practices.) Am I retarding myself, becoming myopic with my ears?

"Dude, bro, just relax. Can't music just be music for its own sake? Listen to this wicked-righteous jam." I do try, and, more often than not, I end up annoyed or disinterested. Am I defective? Will I, as the editor of *Razorcake*, solely champion bands that remain obscured to the mainstream? Is that a primary precondition of recognition within these pages? Yes. Because bands that are calculating the decision

to jump over are aspiring to use a major's advertising and distribution resources in the gamble that a new mass of people will listen to their music.

Razorcake isn't a part of the music industry. Razorcake's largely about music that often gets overlooked by bands that don't play industry games. They focus on playing music. Not being bought and sold solely as a commodity is part of it, but that's not the only reason for deeply interviewing a band like Tiltwheel. In my heart of hearts—especially with interviews I conduct myself—I believe that these bands are the best on the planet playing music today.

Tiltwheel are sweethearts.

Tiltwheel put heavy drinkers to shame.

Tiltwheel are disorganized.

Tiltwheel doesn't move quickly.

Tiltwheel moves in mysterious ways.

Tiltwheel frustrates a lot of people.

Tiltwheel are humble.

Tiltwheel are intelligent in ways that don't come up on tests.

Tiltwheel's music isn't instantly obvious how good it is. It takes

hang out, porch time. It takes bus-ride, bike-ride, and life-sucks time. And within these times, you'll realize you've got a new, long-term buddy who'll help you through: Tiltwheel's songs.

Several years ago, the Rhythm Chicken came out to California for an extended weekend. After we picked him up in L.A., we drove down to San Diego, arriving at around noon. I poked lead singer, guitarist Davey awake. He rolled over, cracked a beer, sat up, smiled at us, and then yelled "Rhythm Chicken! Hooray!" They hadn't met before.

The day went great. Everyone piled into a van. The Rhythm Chicken played a little lady's quinceañera in a park, we all got called homos in a sports bar, high schoolers dressed for prom in taffeta soaked beach-side in his ruckus, and women swore dire poultry revenge as the Chicken played in their bathroom while they had to pee. For thirteen hours straight, Tiltwheel had been drinking. As they were plugging in, the Chicken leaned over to me and whispered, "They look like drunken rats." All three of them looked haggard. Davey had a wee

INTERVIEW BY TODD TAYLOR
SPECIAL THANKS TO JEFF PROCTOR
PHOTOS BY TODD TAYLOR,
MICHAEL CUTTER AND CHERYL SHANTY
DESIGN BY LAUREN MEASURE



bit of trouble getting the tip of a cord into the hole in his guitar, circling it many times before inserting it.

Then Tiltwheel started playing a tight, massive wall of sound. The crowd responded favorably. One excited gentleman misjudged a jump, and overwhelmed by the music, completely ripped out a light fixture above a pool table, which had been providing the sole illumination for the band. In near-complete darkness, Tiltwheel played on without missing a beat. In darkness, the sound was more of an untamed roar.

I remember closing my eyes and just soaking it in. Blind, or blind drunk, here's what these guys cherish doing in their imperfect lives: playing music to buoy themselves above a deep crevice. A minute or so later, the Chicken had appropriated the door guy's ID-checking light, plugged it in, and held it above the band. It sort of looked like a low-wattage, shaky halo.

Tiltwheel isn't a band that's actively sold to you. It's a band that you have to seek out for yourself. I wholly endorse and recommend that you do some searching for them. To me, their music is like a cornucopia of beer, an endless drink of plenty, but legal for all ages and without the hangover from overindulgence.

Here is part two of my interview with Davey Quinn. Issue #52 will have an interview with Paul Trash and J. Wang.

Tiltwheel is:

Davey Quinn: Vocals, guitar

J. Wang: Vocals, bass

Paul Trash: Drums

Todd: What's been your biggest betrayal?

Davey: I dunno. What's your context?

Todd: The band.

Davey: This is before cell phones, but finding out that somebody took money from us and put money down on a place to live and a cell phone when I'm living at my mom's.

Todd: Who was that?

Davey: Danny (Cool Guy Records).

Todd: Danny Cool Guy actually made enough money off of you guys to put a down payment on a house?

Davey: I think he did, because we were the only thing that was selling. Everready pretty much broke up.

Todd: Did he repress it a couple times?

Davey: He repressed *Hair Brained*. Here's my verbal contract: Make your money back and then 50/50. We're all fuckin' pinkos here. I don't get involved with money. I don't like it. I don't care. Money is a fucking piece of paper that buys alcohol. But I know that other people do and that money is like crack. It's fuckin' bad. Its fucked up friendships. All that shit you read about on don't do drugs commercials should be replaced with money. My friends fight over money. Paul Trash and I are on the outs because of money. What am I going to spend it on?

Danny Cool Guy: "I got a house," and then I see him pick up a cell phone. Nobody had cell phones back then. You know, fuck you. And this is the same guy who's like, "You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to go to Guatemala and feed people dry rice and grain. Save the water buffalo." I'm like, "Really? Are you going to call those water buffalos on your cell phone? Fuck you. Fuck off."

Todd: Tell me about 212.

Davey: Jarrod was one of the first kids who I remember that had his own pad in Escondido. Jarrod has this apartment. The number was 212. Then he got another apartment and that was 212. Apparently, his paychecks every week were \$212. It was just this recurring number.

Todd: I thought he was born on February 12th.

Davey: No, he wasn't. If you go and buy two burritos off the ninety-nine cent menu at Taco Bell, it's \$2.12. We'd walk out of the bar, "Hey, let's go get some beer." 2:12. Sometimes, it's 2:07. A lot of time, you wake up and you want to be a day drinker; if you're thinking about it, you wake up, go to breakfast. By that time, time to start drinking. 2:12 PM is a great time to start drinking. There've been a few occasions, especially sometimes I'll be thinking about Jarrod and, I swear to god, I look at the clock and it's 2:12.



TODD TAYLOR

WHEN MY AUNT GOT CANCER, I SHAVED MY HEAD. YOU GOTTA DO SHIT LIKE THAT. IT'S ALL ABOUT SOLIDARITY.

Todd: So how did 212 become a tattoo on so many of your friend's wrists?

Davey: Jarrod was at this bar down the street from his house. I guess he wasn't at work. He was at Bob's. He hadn't been at work for a week. He kept on calling Bob. There's this dip in the road on Vulcan in Encinitas where he could get air out of his car. From what I understand, he'd been calling Bob. "I've been drinking beer and jumping this dip in the road. It's great. I get air and everything." It's like a Burt Reynolds type of thing. One night, he went down to this bar, it might be Yogi's, and he had left his wallet at the bar, went back, picked up his wallet, and drove back. He hit the ditch, flipped his car in mid-air—apparently, he hit the ditch pretty hard—flew out the window, fell into a tree. I got this information from an EMT. He died when he hit the tree, and it just so happened that the tree was in the yard of an apartment building that he once lived in, apartment 212. I haven't seen the reports, but if you do the math, it looks like his time of death might have been 2:12. So, it's like this recurring number; not like Jim Carrey in *The Number 23*.

I don't believe in superstitious shit. If I see a black cat cross my path when I get in my car, I'd run the motherfucker over. I'm not going to go, "Ohh, god, I'm afraid." I miss Jarrod. Jarrod was in the band, bass. He played with us after Squire and Lenny. He was bothering the shit out of us—in a beautiful way—and he's a great kid. I knew him before. His bands were amazing. Sunday Drive. Ever hear those guys Kings Of Leon? I don't know where Kings Of Leon got their Sunday Drive CD from, but they stole it flat-out. Same way Fugazi stole *Red Medicine* from Tanner; you cannot deny it. You listen to *Red Medicine*. That's bullshit.

Todd: A lot of people sincerely miss Jarrod. I never got to meet him.

Davey: I remember hanging out with these Varla Girls and talking mad shit and, at the

same time, I haven't a snowball's chance in hell. I don't have the chance of the Eagles ever getting a number one hit of ever having sex with any woman whatsoever who's not crazy. Skiba (Matt, Alkaline Trio) and Jarrod were really good friends and that night they'd told him that Jarrod had passed away, because it was only a month or two before. Skiba started tearing up. Apparently, we were all drinking buddies. The best thing about drinking buddies is people come up and go, "Hey man, remember me? We partied all night." I'm all, "No, I don't remember. We were partying all night. We were fuckin' wasted. Sorry."

Todd: How did "shirts off, dudes on" come about?

Davey: It just happened.

Todd: Was its "coming out party" at the bowling awards ceremony?

Davey: [Chuckles] Fuck it. Let's set this in stone. There are so many fucking stories about Bob Dylan, which may not be true. I know a lot of stories that he took on the persona of a twelve-year-old black kid, pretending he's Woodie Guthrie, traveling around the world, partying with the rich folks and playing guitar for them. They all thought it was really cute, this little Jewish kid from Minnesota who said he was named after Woodie Guthrie. So, there's legends. Let's start the legend here. We're at bowling and you know how like Suicide Girls and psychobilly and rockabilly and Mike Ness and all that?

Todd: Skinhead retirement program.

Davey: I would give more credence to the skinhead retirement plan than the guys who saw a photo of Mike Ness and said, "You know what? I'll take off my glasses, grease my hair up, wear a jacket with no sleeves, and start talking weird. I'm not going to listen to that Columbia record with the song that Johnny Cash covered." From that, and Betty Page, rest in peace and bless her dear little Christian heart, all of a sudden, you have this

vaudevillian "burly-Q"—what do you call it?—burlesque. So, there's this burlesque show at bowling. This is not the first year of bowling. This is the sixth or seventh year. That shit started way after bowling started. "Okay, now we're going to bring in this new element," which is a throwback to dancing and shaking their tits around and having pasties on and stuff like that. Were you ever a fan of *Happy Days* and the episode in the first season where they go see Bubbles McCall?

Todd: Don't believe I have.

Davey: Oh, they go to a titty bar and they want the girl to take her clothes off but she doesn't. She just has pasties. And then it's a total letdown. Then Richie sees his dad there. But his dad's there on a business trip with their neighbor. He's supposed to be there, then he sees his fuckin' son there, and he's also embarrassed to be there. Anyway, bowling, so these girls are up on stage dancing, shaking their thing to some kind of swing music, something with "Daddy" in the name. So we're like, "We're not going to let them broads get the best of us. Fuck that shit." So we started taking our shirts off and doing the same thing, which is pretty cool. Is that any different from playing air guitar at a Judas Priest concert?

Todd: Absolutely not.

Davey: So we take our shirts off. We start dancing. I happen to look back after awhile, just to see what the girls are thinking, and they were visibly pissed at us because we stole their thunder. Visibly fucking irate. But they got paid for it.

Todd: That was the awards ceremony. Someone broke their leg during that.

Davey: I think it was Sean. Somebody broke his elbow. I had slipped the day before because I had broken my ribs a couple hours before. Somebody broke his arm. (Jacek Krokowski, drummer for Mexico City Rollers, U.S. Defenders, and Victory Mansion broke his hand and wrist. Bear Cub sprained a knee. Russell Guenther, Kolob banjo player, bassist for Machinegun and Victory Mansion got a concussion.) But, goddamn, we had a great time. We're not the kind of people, if you break your rib and you break your arm, "Okay, the party has to stop now." If it was—I dunno—one of our girlfriends, the world would stop. So, dudes partying, man.

The Sterns (BYO, who run punk rock bowling) wrote me an email, pissed off at me. Apparently, some monitors got fucked up and got water poured on them. I was all, "It was dancers, sweating all over that shit." After a little time, I thought about it. It may actually have been me making the really big mistake of spilling water. I think I went and made a peace offering. I don't know. That's the only reason I would bring water on the stage 'cause I'm not an asshole in that way. Apparently, the girls were really angry. But, hey, guess what. They haven't had burlesque shows at bowling since then. Also, at the same time, we met a couple of girls who happened to be there who live in San Diego and they're nice to us. They're like, "These guys are so funny." It was probably the girl

who was running the fuckin' thing, for all I know. But it's a great way to meet people. So, shirts off, dudes on and we were probably singing, "Shirts off! Dudes on!" Because, you know, songs happen.

Todd: Have you just gone to the liquor store, shirts off, dudes on, and been told to put your shirt back on?

Davey: I'm the type of dude, like, J. Wang was sick one time. Couldn't shit, so the doctor gave him some pills to shit. I'm all, "I'm not going to let J. Wang be alone." So, I took those pills, too. When my aunt got cancer, I shaved my head. You gotta do shit like that. It's all about solidarity. So we're in the 7-11 on Adams and Led, from Watch It Burn, takes his shirt off and walks in to buy beer. The dude's arguing with him. You can visually see it. So, of course, I get out of the car, take my shirt off, and go in. "What's the fuckin' problem here?" Freakin' out the squares, man.

Todd: Can you talk about Jay-Z's people stealing your equipment, or is it sensitive?

Davey: It's not sensitive and fuck that motherfucker. Here's the deal. So, I do sound and I travel with bands. I do FOH, (Front Of House), compressors, preamps. Something I really needed and put a lot of time and effort into, was acquiring a set of four really decent tube preamps. Eight compressors. A reverb unit. Like a basic thing I can carry around doing sound.

Nichol (Pyle) was living in Bienstock forever and I made friends with a lot of



TODD TAYLOR

people in the neighborhood, just generally because that's what we do. I don't hide from motherfuckers. You hang out. I didn't get in until four in the morning. I went down to the bulletproof glass liquor store—which is in a song—six-inch-thick Lexan, talked to a dude. Hanging out.

Bought him a beer. Drank a beer on the corner. Went to sleep. Woke up a couple hours later. Went outside. The back window of the van's broken and my preamps are gone. I was wasted and my rig was gone. I go outside and this dude Barbecue was like, "Shit, that was your van? We didn't

THE PARTISANS

Todd: Tell me The Partisans story.

Davey: Partisans. Were you a Partisans fan?

Todd: I really love that *So Neat 7"* that TKO released in 2001.

Davey: I think they're amazing. Hey, guess what, punk? Shit's still fucked up. We spend eight years in the worst fuckin' administration in the world. So, here's The Partisans. Pick up The Partisans at the airport. Go on tour with The Partisans. Andy, Dutch guy, Rob "Spike" Harrington. Rob's drunk already. Great. He's just really quiet.

I took Rob over to Hot Topic in the mall in Escondido. Here's Spike—Rob is Spike—walking around inside of Hot Topic, just staring at all of this shit. All of a sudden, he goes, "Turning rebellion into money!" [In whispering voice] "This is fucking amazing. This is so stupid." He's so fucking into it. I'm all, "I'm glad you like it, man." He just yells it in the store, by himself. I just start laughing my ass off. The guy's a punk rocker.

We get to the first show, which is at The Showcase (Corona, CA). They have no equipment, except Andy has his guitar with him. Andy's complaining about the drum set. I think I had to drive back down to San Diego. It worked out. Little equipment problems. A little whining. Little prima donna shit here

and there, which happens, big deal. You're nervous. You're in another country. You've never toured the U.S. before. I don't think they ever played a show in the U.S. before. Really worried. Really excited.

They get on stage. Come out. Here comes Rob Harrington, who hasn't said two fuckin' words the whole time except for "please" and "thank you." Rob goes [in leering English voice], "You all look lovely. I went to Hot Topic today." To spiky-haired punk kids, right. At one point, he's like, [more leeringly] "Fashion." They started playing. I'm thirty-four, thirty-five years old. Saw the first punk band I've ever seen in my life that night. I had never seen a punk band before. Seriously, I don't give a fuck. You cannot tell me you have ever seen a punk band if you have not seen The Partisans. I don't care. I saw the fucking Clash. Bored the fucking shit out of me at the US Festival. That wasn't punk. That was a great part of the show. Wow. Holy shit. Now I know why I like these guys.

Let's fast forward. We fly out to New York. We're jet setting with the big boys. Dudes' girlfriends show up. I take them shopping a few times, sightseeing. And Rob's really quiet. "Rob, what do you want to do?" Me and him are just palling around, getting

wasted every night. Everybody in the band is great, but Rob and I just bro'd down. His fuckin' teeth hurt so we went and gave a fake name to a dentist and he got his teeth fixed. And I guess the government paid to get his teeth fixed over here.

Here's the long story short part, I hope, which actually never happens. Rob goes, "You know what? I don't like sight seeing." We're in New York. "Do you want to go to the Statue of Liberty?" "No." He's drunk all the time. So am I. "I don't like shopping." I'm like, "So, what do you want to do?" He's all, "I'm in America. I want to get arrested." [Laughs] I will never forget the tone of the voice.

Next day, we go to Philly, an hour away from New York City. They played a show. We all go back to the hotel, a Motel 6, and Rob and I are just hanging out with a couple dudes from Philly who we know, dudes from The Virus. There are some really cool fuckin' people who are in those fashion punk bands. Just dudes. So we're just hanging out. Four of us, total. Then this weird dude comes up, starts dancing and playing shitty Rolling Stones, like *Tattoo You*, and telling us how rad The Rolling Stones are, but playing the second worst record they ever put out. He's dancing like Mick Jagger. Fuckin' horrible. Probably on speed or something. The

know whose van that was. If we knew that was your van..." Barbecue's a street dude, a guy we'd offered before to sleep in the van so he wouldn't be cold. That night I didn't see Barbecue, but Barbecue saw the van, because Barbecue sees everything in the neighborhood. He knows everything that is going on. Come out in the morning, Barbecue runs over to the phone, calls the cops. And I'm all, "Barbecue, don't call the cops. I don't deal with cops." Couple other dudes come out of their pads. "Oh, shit. Your stuff got ripped off? I'm going to take care of this for you." All these people in the neighborhood. Your New York hardcore dudes, street bums, regular-ass brothers, the two old guys like in *Do the Right Thing*, sitting on the corner. They're all hanging out and the cops show up. When the cops show up, they're the most unwanted element because they're not going to do a goddamn thing; the people in the neighborhood will. "We're going to take care of this for you, man."

Ended up in Georgia, partying at Dave Brockie's (Gwar) house and I don't know if you've ever partied with Dave Brockie, but, apparently, it snows in Georgia. We got a phone call from a dude Paul, in New York. "Yo. Hey. Check it out, dude. We know where your stuff is. I did a little fuckin' lookin." I'm all, "Awesome." He's like, "Here's the problem. This dude who produced Jay-Z bought your shit for a hundred bucks and Jay-Z says that he ain't giving it back."

Apparently, somebody went up and told Nichol that if we wanted to start a race war in Bienstock, bring it on—over my equipment. I said, "Put the word out. I will pay you double for what you bought it for. I just want my shit back." Because I'm a fuckin' bum. I live in a fuckin' van, traveling around. I just want my shit back so I can keep doing what I do. And I never got my shit back.

Then I went to Germany, get an email from some girl at *MTV News*, going, "Hey, I heard this story that Jay-Z has your shit and we're going to help you get it back." It could have been a reality show, for all I know. I'm not going to use this opportunity to wear a Tiltwheel shirt on camera and talk about my band. I just want my shit back. If my car gets stolen, good. Steal the goddamn thing. But if you steal my equipment and I know who stole it and it's a dude with a lot of goddamn money and MTV's calling me over it, I want my shit back.

I called Nichol. She's all, "Don't. Everybody knows where I live. It'll come back to me." I said, "Cool." So I told the MTV lady to go fuck herself. Fast forward to last year. He's doing this Jay-Z Unplugged and he starts in, "I know where I came from, man. This one's for all the dudes who just want to break in and do this. I was there from the streets and I remember the time I had no money in my pocket." And I'm watching that. I'm listening to what he says, and if he didn't

have anything at all to do with my shit, I would have probably been like, "Hey, yeah man. That shit's tight. That's some for-real shit." Then I'm like, wait, wait. I fuckin' contacted you personally with the message that I'm a fuckin' piece of shit with no money trying to play music and trying to help motherfuckers out on the street and I got back that you want to start a race war? White versus black shit. I'm not having any of that fuckin' crap. That's fuckin' retarded. So, Jay-Z, if you're reading this, come to San Diego and I will cut you and you cannot have a posse big enough to fuckin' escape. Guess what? This is the war. This. Is. Fuckin'. War. You are the fuckin' Osama bin Laden of punk rock right now, fuckface. I'm 9/11 shaped like a dick in your asshole.

Todd: If you had the opportunity to do it, would you tour all the time? If everything matched up, would that be your ideal life?

Davey: Right now, it would be difficult. Back a year, when gas was four dollars, we couldn't do it. But, would that be my ideal life? Yes. Breaking hearts, here. Now, I need one day at home, not talking to anybody else, once every two months. One day without a cell phone every two months. I want porn, jerk off, and weed; smoke cigarettes, shit where I want. Maybe wipe my ass. And then I'm fine, seriously. 'Cause when I come back from tour, others are like, [in whiney voice] "I can't wait to get home to my couch." Yeah, me

rest of The Partisans guys are sleeping. A little bit of micromanagement is going on between me and Andy, the guitar player. I think Andy's been taking care of Rob for much longer than he cares to take care of him, but he needs Rob. It's like Lennon and McCartney if Lennon did heroin and McCartney was a Jesus freak but they couldn't be without each other, but not that bad.

Todd: Like a Dee Dee / Johnny Ramone thing.

Davey: Right. There you go. So, the cops fuckin' pull up. And you know me and cops. "All right. You got me. I'm going in. Fuck it. I've had my fun up until now." I'm not all, [in mopey voice] "I know my rights." So, here come the cops and they get out. We're all, "Gotcha. All right, dude. We're going to bed, man. We'll see you later." Phthweew. Rob fires a bottle at the cop car, hits the fuckin' window. Bottle smashes. The cops don't flip out or anything. He gets up and he walks up with his arms out and says, "I did it. Arrest me." And the cops go, [shrugging] "All right." They put the cuffs on him and throw him in the car. They didn't even throw him in the car. They're like, "Watch your head as you go in." He's like, [excitedly] "Okay." He's like a kid.

Todd: Getting strapped into a ride.

Davey: He's so fuckin' stoked and the cops are just like, "Hold it down, you guys." We're all, "Get the fuck out of here, Rolling Stones dude." To the cops, I'm all, "Who do I call?" They're like, "Give us about a half hour and

then call us." "All right." I'm drunk. I have to stay awake. I go to a diner, order a coffee. "Where's the cop station?" "Across from the Holiday Inn over there." I call the cops. They answer the phone. I go, "Where's my Welshman?" They're like, "Don't talk to us like that." Click. So I called back. "I'm sorry. I'm trying to find Rob Harrington. He just got picked up over at the Motel 6. They're cool about it. "Rob's here. We've booked him. He's sitting in the room, talking to the officers right now." I'm like, "Can I get him out?" They're like, "He says he wants to stay here because he's having a great time talking to the cops and we really enjoy his company." Swear to god. "What we'll do is we'll bring him to you in the morning." I'm all, "You know what room? Cool. Can I talk to him really quick?" to make sure that's a true story. I can actually hear him in the background running his goddamn gob. Visually, I just picture him sitting on this bench, probably not even handcuffed anymore, and going like, "Having a great fuckin' time in the States." It's Philly. It's not Texas, so it's where freedom was born, where real shit happened.

Mind you, the rest of the guys don't know yet. Eight in the morning. I always sleep next to the door for a few reasons. The main reason is that cold air comes through the door and I like being cold and I understand that other people don't. [Makes knocking sound] I wake up, open the door, and there's a cop standing

there. And they're like, "Can you come and get him now? These guys want to go home and they're over him." I'm like, "Really?" "Yeah. We fed him pancakes. He had breakfast but he won't go to sleep and they're over it." I'm all, "Can you give me ride over there?" He's all, "No. I have to go on patrol." I'm all, "What do I do? I don't know where the station is." He gives me the address.

I'm still wake-up-with-beer-spilled-on-your-shirt wasted. So, I walk over to this Holiday Inn, go up to the counter—I think I have a beer in my hand—and I'm like, "Hey, would you mind having your hotel shuttle driver driving over to the jail so I can pick up my friend and drop us off at the Motel 6?" They're like, "Yeah." I'm like, "I'll give you five dollars." They're like, "Okay." There's old people with their luggage still in the shuttle. They take me to the jail. There's Rob. He comes out; we get into the shuttle. These old people are still in the back. He drops me off. I give him twenty dollars. Me and Rob get out of the shuttle. Then, all of a sudden, a window opens and there's Andy. I get a stern talking to. "You're our tour manager. You're not supposed to let things like this happen." I'm all, "He totally wanted to get arrested. Everything worked out great. It didn't cost a goddamn thing, thirty-five dollars or some shit like that. And I think I paid him out of my own pocket because it was a great experience. That is more punk than anything I've ever done in my life.

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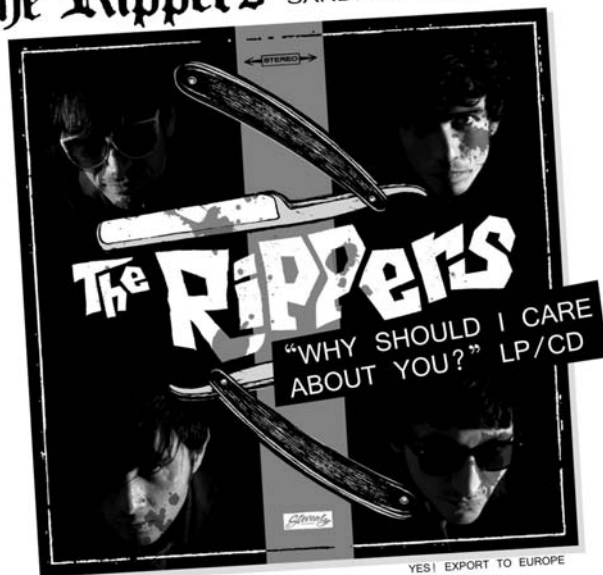
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TODD TAYLOR

SLAYER

Todd: How did you get Slayer banned from Scolari's?

Davey: We're playing a regular-assed show at Scolari's. Great fuckin' place. Our friend Gandhi, from Altaira, is going apeshit. We're playing. The week before, Fleshies played and John (Geek) had punched his way through the roof, disappeared singing. You just hear this voice with this mic chord up there. And he'd drop down his head down once in awhile like a lurker, into the crowd from the drop roof. Fuckin' amazing.

Here's the thing about bands. You can't see past where the lights on stage stop. There's no stage at Scolari's. It's one or two lamps with blue light bulbs in them. Or, a fluorescent light above. But you don't really get to see past that. I had no idea what was going on. I just hear breaking shit. I look, and all of a sudden, one of the lights over one of the pool tables disappears. I just see bottles flying and it's Gandhi firing bottles, trying to break the back glass of the bar and trying to nail the bottles on the booze rack. Cool. Whatever. Fine, man. I don't give a fuck. If you get caught, you get caught. Whatever happens, happens.

That's the sort of shit if we did that in PB (Pacific Beach, a snobbier, douchey-er neighborhood of San Diego.), we'd get our asses kicked. At Scolari's, it's just another night. We're done. We're packing out shit up. Bob and I are there. Paul's off somewhere else. So, Sandy, the Silver Fox—the Silver Mullet, that's what we called her—she's like, "I don't know, man. You guys were inciting the crowd. The people were throwing bottles and breaking shit." And I look and there's just broken shit all over the place. "Hey, Sandy, you know, we don't know what's going on. We're

playing our fuckin' stupid songs and I can't see a foot in front of me. We're not inciting anything. Did you hear us tell people to break shit?" She's all, "No, no. What's the name of your band?" Bob and I, for some reason, pretty much at the same time, go "Slayer." And she goes, "Well, Slayer's banned from Scolari's." And we're like, "Fuuuck, that sucks." I'm telling the nice version of the story because I was telling Sandy she could go fuck herself. "Sandy, you're the one serving drinks to these motherfuckers, so if they start getting wasted, breaking shit, that's your fuckin' fault, not mine. Sandy, I know you worked in a bar for a long time, but you need to get your shit straight or your career in the bar is going to be short-lived." I'm talking shit to the girl who got us wasted and is about to pay us money. "Don't fuckin' yell at me, woman." So, we got revenge because we went in the bar at six in the morning the next day fuckin' wasted, and she had no idea who the fuck we were. So, Slayer got banned from Scolari's. The place is closed now.



either. For one day. One day, that's it. You've known me for a long time. I'm married now, but I still don't have cement under my feet and that's the cause of a lot of fights, bless Annie's dear heart. And now, I'm forty goddamn years old. This is the age of people buying convertibles and toupees and fucking twenty-year-olds. I'm like, "I want to go on tour." Honestly, when it really comes down to it, there is no difference living paycheck to paycheck, living day to day, and doing it in a van. I live in a bedroom a little bit bigger than our van. I'm comfortable in a van.

Todd: I think we're both blessed and cursed. At a very young age, we knew what we wanted to do and we've continued to do it for decades.

Davey: Our betrothed are not in full understanding of our lifestyle, but I know that motherfucking lifestyle makes them little sparks fly. "That guy don't give a shit." Being in a band, doing a zine in punk rock, whatever, isn't that really completely different from motorcycle bad boys; because all we're doing is just being ourselves.

Todd: It's an organic thing. Age is a factor. Long-term relationships. Being employed.

Davey: I didn't even have long-term relationships before. I never did. I'm a nerd, dude. I like computers more than I like women. Sorry.

Todd: Let's talk about work.

Davey: Touring's work. I used to work at an airport. Two years or some shit like that. I had a period where I actually drank a bottle of whiskey a day and that turned into two bottles of whiskey. I wasn't depressed or anything, but that was what I did when I woke up. Then, going to work, and I didn't have shoes on. I used to not wear shoes. I love to take my shoes off but my feet stink. I'd go to punk shows with no shoes. Skinheads would try to break my feet. Fuck it. So, I showed up with no shoes. Ralph (Ludie), we were in a weird Mustang. A couple years in the '80s...

Todd: The Mustang II, the one built on the same sub-frame as the Pinto?

Davey: It was the Pinto of Mustangs. It did not have anything to do with the Mustang whatsoever.

Todd: It was supposed to be a fuel-efficient, muscle car. It was neither.

Davey: So, my boss sees us. To Ralph, "You're fucked up." To me, "but you can still walk in a straight line but you have no shoes on, so you can work." So I hop in the plane. "You can't be in the plane without any fuckin' shoes on." 'Cause a week later, the foot thing happened where I almost got my foot cut off. So, I'm glad he did that. So, I had to watch the gate to make sure that the right people were coming in. Other people were supposed to watch the gate but hadn't come in. He goes, "You need to wear shoes to be at the airport, and I need you to work." Went and grabbed some newspaper and spray paint. Wrapped the newspaper around my

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SHANTY CHERYL

**SO, JAY-Z, IF YOU'RE READING THIS,
YOU ARE THE FUCKIN' OSAMA
BINLADEN OF PUNK ROCK RIGHT
NOW, FUCKFACE. I'M 9/11 SHAPED LIKE
A DICK IN YOUR ASSHOLE.**

feet, huge, spray painted them black and I stood at the gate. When I would do the gate, I was dealing with big trucks, so I would skate. Doing the gate was this thing you did once a week because that was the easy job. You didn't bust a sweat. So, I'm doing the gate, I'm skating around, and I've got newspapers on my feet. But I didn't get fired for it. The guy was great. My boss's favorite band was the Beat Farmers. Not only his favorite, but an

obsession situation. I've always managed to have cool bosses.

Todd: Is it true that the Beastie Boys stole the pill logo?

Davey: Did they? Are you serious?

Todd: On their clothing line.

Davey: Oh, okay. All right. Adam runs X-Large. I get an email from Kris Pierce and the subject line is "Look at this fucked up shit," 'cause they didn't steal it from us. As far as I'm concerned, we don't own

that. That's Shane's. (Shane is the tattooist and longtime friend who designed the pill logo and has started the Pill Cult.) Japanese things are cool, man. If I wanted to be an entrepreneur, I would take Japanese shit and take it and call it like "Ameripan.com." Check it out. 2010. Anyway, so he sends me this link to X-Large. Here's the pill with "Watermelon fashion is go" or something. Eighty goddamn dollars for a fuckin' T-shirt. This fucking cunt is taking our shit.

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THE REZILLOS

Todd: Faye Fife.

Davey: Faye Fife of the Rezillos. My family. My love. My heart. We ended up with this weird relationship, right? We were in Jersey. [In thick Scottish female accent] "Davey, I need you to go get something." We sat in the van, and she's all, "Davey, don't start the van yet." We're heading into New York City the next day. And she goes, "I need to talk to you in confidence," which is a great way to start a story. "Davey, I haven't had sex in weeks. I'm lonely." And I'm like, "Don't take this the wrong way. Is there anything I can help you out with?" Because I'm ready to go at any time. I'm your tour manager. "Ah, no, Davey. I don't like you like that, but you think you could get me a vibrator?" [Laughs] "I'm lonely." As the tour manager, I have to do these things. Slayer's tour manager would be, "Fuck off" and would delegate the responsibility to somebody, but, me, I have to do it. So, we get to The City after the show in Camden and go get a hotel. It was the last night before the last show. Everybody's having a great time. "Davey, can you go get that for me?" It's three in the goddamn

morning and she calls me. "Davey, I really need that." I crossed over the island, went to upper 83rd where there's porn shops and shit. So I go into this sex shop. A New York City wall of dildos. It's not a Camden wall of dildos. "You've got great New York dildos," right? Do I get her the one that's larger than eight cans of Coke in a sock? Do I get her The Shocker, the Dio? What do you buy for the girl who has nothing?

So, I bought her a gag gift. Earlier in the day, she's all, "I really like California. The Mexican food is amazin'." So, I found this Southwestern chili pepper dildo. You put batteries in it and you insert it into an orifice of legal age, or your own. I went in and Eugene—the other singer of the Rezillos—they had just initiated Johnny into the band as an official Rezillo. He took over William Mysterious's legacy at that point. But, Faye and Angel had this thing for thirty years and they'd never had sex until that night. So, I get in the room. These two have been waiting thirty years to have sex. The last thing that was in her vagina was a child going the other way. I go in there; it's double wrapped in a bag.

A Tome of Self-Destructive Musical Merriment Starring...



We sat there and talked. We're all hugging. Drinking sake. Faye pulls me aside and she's all, "Davey, thanks for getting that for me, but I don't need it no more." I'm like, "Oh, Faye, bless your dear heart. I'm so happy for you. Congratulations on getting laid."

Her old boyfriend, Mysterious, had been pretty much saying, "You and Angel should have fucked a long time, but you didn't. That's what ruined our band and ruined our lives." So, the next day, the rest of the band fucked off. She had stayed and we were hanging out. "I liked it, Davey. It's really nice, but it's a bit slow." [Laughs] I love Faye Fife.

Todd: How important is the Tiltwheel family?

Davey: Did you say Tiltwheel fans or family?

Todd: Family.

Davey: I'm forty years old. I should be driving that car [points to a shiny Mercedes], owning that house [points to a renovated house across the street], and wearing nicer shorts. I am, ultimately, melancholy, suicidal, depressed. But as black as I feel, I've got the biggest motherfucking smile on my face, ever, because of the people I love. The job I have right now (kitchen manager for a bar/café), the worst part about working is not spending time with friends. It really is. So, I've been using the mantra that there's always going to be another party, but, you know what, we see so many great, beautiful things here. It's still beautiful. Look at that fight shit. (A new bro-dude night club opened up in San Diego. The night before, the patrons started a fight with Davey's friends. April Cava was hit in the face. Corey Cava lost his glasses trying to break it up.) We are going to make that stop by removing that element from this town. And we will. We're still just a bunch of dumb fucking alcoholics, but we're not going to have it because that ruins our bad time.

Todd: In the '80s, the San Diego punk scene was brutal. I can honestly say—coming from outside of Las Vegas—I was scared of it.

Davey: And I was part of it. You didn't ask me about that shit. When I saw that thing in *MRR* (a piece mentioned that San Diego's scene was the most violent in the United States), I



MICHAEL HOPPER (CUTTER)

was fuckin' happy because I was an asshole. If you would have ever come to a punk show in San Diego, I would have punched you. If you would have gotten punched in San Diego, it would have been a couple of the people who I introduced you to last night. Violence. Violence is not fashion. Because fashion is where you get your fuckin' head beat, when you watch your friends die. I hate that shit. Anyway. My family is important to me, not in a gang way.

That and being surprised that any girl is dumb enough to marry me or that any other human being would do anything to me other than try and put me in prison—and not just me, but any one of those motherfuckers in that bar (Tiltwheel dudes, and San Diegans drinking next door) right now, I love those guys. I love my family.

interview by todd taylor & matt army

photos by shanty cheryl

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UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

CANDY



YLAND

The canary in the mineshaft is dead. We are in a new musical world.

Songs of quality. It's surprising that what should be the central focus of any musical discussion is continuously left out of the conversation by so many. Underground Railroad To Candyland write great, catchy, unique songs. That's the sum of it. Go ahead and use some fancy word algorithms, reach for far-fung descriptions and musical analogies, but the proof, for me, is in the spins. You may already be more familiar with URTC than you know. It's a lot of the San Pedro, California, brain trust behind Toys That Kill, and that's a solid starting point for where this band is coming from: energetic party songs, smoke-hooked melodies, and open-to-interpretation lyrics, all in a DIY punk context.

Bird Roughs, URTC's first and only full length at the time of this interview, has been in heavy rotation at Razorcake HQ for over a year and a half. Many who have come through our offices will stop, turn to me, and ask "Who's this," liking it plenty. This shit makes me smile.

Call me a ye olde wood dildó, but I've never been one to let computers and robots help decide who my "friends" are in my "social network." I view music and my friends as a highly personal choice, one rooted in an intimacy that's not based in binary code, but hanging out, doing stuff together, celebrating, and fucking up. It's equal parts laughter and bad decisions.

If you rely on electronic devices to make your musical choices for you, please don't mistake bots, spiders, page hits, and pay-to-play magazine covers as celebrators of music. They are devices doing their best to track your behavior in order to control you, if even to convince you to buy some truly disposable music. So, to avoid looking at the expertly designed, empty wrapper of some fast-food musical equivalent, filled with a belly of bad rumblings and buyer's remorse just once, I highly recommend some Candyland in your diet. Give it a shot.

Todd Congelli: Guitar, vocals
Jimmy Jackets: Drums
Chachi Ferrara: Bass, fun station
Jack Blast: Hype man, vocals
Joel Jerome: Organ, fun station

Taylor: Explain the set up of the band—how it was first envisioned and how it is operating today.

Todd: I thought it was first envisioned as a cover band, actually.

Taylor: What type of covers?

Todd: "Hairy Rag" by The Kinks. There was a Who song.

Jimmy: "Boris the Spider."

Todd: Just the classics. I thought that idea sounded kind of cool: "Oh, you don't have to worry about writing anything. You know you like this song." Back then, it was probably really easy to make records. So, that was kind of like the first idea.

Taylor: Like The Sonics. They peppered in a lot of covers with their own material. Also, you didn't want to do any official releases with Underground Railroad? "It's MP3s; it's free. We're all a bunch of hippies."

Todd: This guy from Germany, who does Rockstar Records, asked us to do a 10" split with The Pricks. After that, we were like, "Let's do an album then. Fuck it. If we've already put out a release, it spoils that. We can't go down that path anymore."

Taylor: So, the split 10" was prior to *Bird Roughs*?

Todd: No, it came out way after, but we recorded it a long time ago. It was supposed to come out years ago, and it came out a couple years too late. We recorded *Bird Roughs* in a couple of days.

Jimmy: At Joel's studio. We tracked in one day.

Todd: The mixing was a couple weeks, on and off. It took, probably, four full days of sitting in there, and then we just pressed it up because we were going on tour. I guess we broke the streak of not doing releases, but we'd already committed to one. It was

a stupid idea anyways. Releases are fun. I just didn't want to fuck with it. It was really just to do stuff because Chachi was doing longshoring and Sean (Cole, both of Toys That Kill) was talking about going to culinary school, so I just wanted to do something that could possibly tour while those guys were doing stuff.

Taylor: This is the hardest question to ask you guys. How does Sean Cole, the only member of Toys That Kill who is not in Underground Railroad To Candyland, feel about this band?

Todd: Well he [pointing to Chachi] wasn't in it. Them two had conspiracy meetings. Jimmy—I couldn't think of any other drummer I wanted to play with.

Jimmy: Thanks.

Todd: The band started with just me and Jimmy playing in a practice room. The first time we ever played, I had one of my songs. It wasn't just all covers. I think, when I said it was going to be all covers, it was before we actually played. Then, all of a sudden, I had songs. Then I was all, "Fuck it. Let's use it. I don't really think this sounds too much like Toys That Kill. I think it's different." I think Sean mentioned something about being bummed that, when we first played at Harold's (local San Pedro dive bar), he pretty much said, "It was like seeing Toys That Kill playing a show, but me and Chachi weren't invited."

Chachi: Yeah, he was bummed at first. He used to call it "TTK light."

Taylor: "With Splenda."... Coming from an outsider's point of view, I could see both of your sides. He wants to go to culinary school. "We'll put this on hiatus." You, Todd, still want to be creative, to continue doing something with people you're comfortable with.

Todd: I remember specifically. We were driving back from practice. It was me, Chachi, and Sean. And Chachi kind of dropped the bombshell. Toys That Kill bought the van together, thinking we were

going to be touring for at least five years. Chachi was telling me he was going to be doing the full-time longshoring thing and it was kind of like, "Whoah." Instantly, Sean clocked in with, "You know what? That's good because I'm thinking about going to culinary school." If someone said that in FYP, I would be like, "Fuck you. You're out. I hate you." But I was like, "I think I'm older now. I'm growing up." These guys are cool. They're my friends. I want to be friends with them for a while. "Okay, well, I hope it doesn't hurt your guys' feelings. I want to start a new band." That was pretty much it. It kind of took a while. You can't get news like that and the next day have a new band. But in my mind, it was already done, but there was no name. "Well, it's just going to be a cover band." But, deep down inside, it's "Fuck. That sucks."

I'm kind of happy about this situation. Toys That Kill was the only band that I started where, "There's this name. There's this plan. We have this blueprint." This was kind of like FYP, where it's like, "Oh, we'll do it." Then the name came out of someone's ass and it was funny. Then songs came. It was natural. It's one of those things where I didn't expect anyone to fully support it. I didn't expect any sort of backlash from good friends. It's all good now. I talked to Sean, even a while back, after. It was harder than I thought. Before, I thought it was the typical scene, talk shit behind your back bullshit, but the way he explained it to me, I was like, "Oh, shit." I felt kind of bad, but I didn't think I was doing that. I thought I was upfront with everybody. I didn't think it was something I shouldn't have done. I still don't.

Chachi started playing bass when Jack Doyle would be out of town. I remember

Jimmy calling me up. "I don't think we should do this, because it's really like Toys That Kill without Sean." I saw that point. We stopped that.

Chachi: At Alex's Bar, whatever song, do a drum roll. Jimmy's all, "Help me out on this one part." So, I came up and did one part of one song with you guys. The next night, I did it again. And the next time, Jimmy's all, "Why don't you play the whole show?" All's I had was a floor tom. Then, gradually, I got a hi-hat, and a tambourine or a maraca. Then we got Joel playing keyboards.

Todd: Joel started just from recording us. Then he ended up playing organ. So, we had six guys up there. Nothing was really planned. It was whatever we needed.

Chachi: Fill in those spaces.

Todd: People's feelings could get hurt, but it was never like, "This is going to fuck them up."

Taylor: If you had to come up with a rough estimate, what percentage of Underground Railroad is informed by smoking too much weed?

Todd: You can never smoke too much weed. [laughter] It's not like your dad gets a call, "Your son just died of a weed overdose." [laughter] I think every single song is written like that.

Jimmy: I think it's more influenced by chocolate than it is with weed.

Todd: That's what you guys said in that last interview. Chocolate never makes me write a song. If I have a chocolate bar, I'll put the guitar down in a second.

Jimmy: What about "Body of the Bird"? Weren't you guys eating chocolate when you started singing that?

Todd: Probably, but that was Jack (Blast, who was painting a house in San Clemente at

the time the interview started). I think every Toys That Kill song and every Candyland song was written under the influence of marijuana. FYP, not so much. Maybe the later days.

Taylor: So, candy, no? Or, it is Jack who mostly eats the candy?

Todd: He eats candy for breakfast.

Chachi: Half gallon of milk. Whole bag of cookies. He'll finish it off.

Todd: Vitamin D, whole fat milk. He doesn't drink anything less. I guarantee by the time this interview prints, he'll have diabetes. I keep trying to get him to stop... I eat a lot of sugar, too, so I'm not going to talk. But he scares me sometimes.

Chachi: Every stop on tour.

Taylor: The metabolism has to give out sometime.

Todd: And if that happens, we'll have to take "candy" out of our name because it'll be a sore subject. [laughter]

Taylor: Underground Railroad to Fiberland or something.

Todd: If he got liver disease and we were Underground Railroad to Beerland, we'd have to change it to Underground Railroad to Emo's.

Taylor: So, what are your day jobs? Chachi, are you now a full-time dock worker?

Chachi: Yeah, class B union guy. Probationary. I've got to be there all the time.

Taylor: Do you have more flexibility than when you just started out?

Chachi: No, I have less flexibility. My next step, I'll have more flexibility. It's just this economy. We're slow, so they're not elevating anyone. I just filled out an application a little bit more than ten years ago, and they were accepting anyone who passed all of the tests. The last time, they didn't give out



"Your son just died of a weed overdose."

applications. They gave out a postcard for an opportunity for an application. For the newer people, it's a lottery pick. They have three thousand openings, and about half a million people sent in a postcard.

Taylor: What about you, Jimmy? What do you do for a day job?

Jimmy: Fix computers. Pretty much a boring job.

Taylor: IT stuff?

Jimmy: Yeah. Help desk. Help people with any technological problem.

Taylor: On the phone, or do you go and repair computers?

Jimmy: Both. On the phone, I'll remote into someone's computer, or I just go to people's desks—'cause we have people in the office and we have people out around the world—so I just help them out. Weird little problems.

Todd: Why don't you tell him the last house call you made?

Jimmy: [laughs] Well, that's outside of my normal duties. Sometimes I make house calls, and I got a tip that Shelley Long needed a hand with her computer problems.

Taylor: From *Cheers*?

Todd: TV's Diane.

Jimmy: Yeah.

Todd: Jimmy had to stop because she started falling for him.

Jimmy: [embarrassed] No. Shut up. That's not true.

Todd: He took off his shirt when he did it. [laughter]

Taylor: And he was immediately sweaty.

Jimmy: It was hot in her apartment, man.

Todd: [In German accent] I've come to fix your megabytes.

Taylor: What about you, Todd?

Todd: I work at Recess Records. I'm the boss. [laughter] It's a good job for as long as it will last. I like it.

Taylor: Over one hundred releases.

Todd: We're getting into the 120s pretty soon. It's a lot. It's too much for one man to handle.

Taylor: And you're the only man?

Todd: Yeah. I get, occasionally, friends' help. Jack Blast helps out now because he pays really cheap rent. I could get a lot more for the back house.

Taylor: He subsidizes it through labor.

Todd: We're trying to get him going. I have to wake up really early nowadays just to do what other people would do if they worked here. It's at that point where I can't afford to hire anybody, but I need a lot of work done. But it's fun. I like getting up early to do this stuff.

Taylor: What is the "Fun Station"?

Chachi: I have a keyboard setup and a little percussion area.

Taylor: How is that fun?

Chachi: How is it not fun? It's the best of both worlds.

Todd: That was coined by Hammy because Hammy went on tour with us.

Taylor: Hammy is Hamilton.

Todd: Brian Hamilton from the Fleshes. He had, pretty much, a similar setup. "Dude, it's a Fun Station." So, now Chachi's the man behind it. It's fun, but it's pretty important nowadays.

Chachi: Definitely fills it out, makes it sound good.

Todd: Every time we've gone to Japan, we just have the basic four dudes who we started with.

Taylor: A Not-Fun Station?

Todd: No Fun Station. It's still fun. We have the funnest shows over there, but, at the same time, there's something missing.

Chachi: People always love Jimmy playing and if I play on the extra tom, people trip out on that.

Taylor: There's something about double drummers that's exciting. If they have different kits, it's better.


Todd: Every time I've seen two drummers doing the same thing, it's always the weirdest, stupidest thing.

Taylor: [Asking the band to speak on behalf of Jack Blast] So, Jack, why don't you eat pizza?

Imitation Jack: I don't care for cheese.

Todd: That's what he would say.

Imitation Jack: It's gross, dude. One time



You shouldn't spend \$15,000
recording a fucking record.
It's that simple.

I put cheese in my mouth. Uuunnggghh. So gross.

Taylor: But he likes milk.

Chachi: And parmesan. A little bit.

Jimmy: But that's not like cheese.

Chachi: He'll have a little parmesan on pasta. The story I heard, when he was a little kid, his older brother didn't like cheese so he took that stance, you know, being a six-year-old. "I don't like cheese, either." And he just stuck to his guns.

Todd: One time I, out of nowhere: "I've got to find out why you don't like cheese." So I said to him, "Did your brother do something? Did he hold a big string of cheese above your head?" He said to me, "Well, something like that." [laughter]

Chachi: Traumatized.

Todd: So that made me think there was some trauma there, but I don't think so. I think it's what you just said.

Taylor: So, Todd, how long have you been in a fantasy football league with Green Day?

Todd: Just one season.

Jimmy: Twelve and zero.

Todd: Man, Jimmy is the biggest curse. I was eleven and zero. That's really good. That's historic. Jimmy texts me from Hawaii. He's laying out on a Sunday morning, before anything gets started, saying, "So, are you twelve and zero yet?" which is a curse. It hadn't started.

Jimmy: I ended up ruining his season.

Matt Army: You would have been the '72 Dolphins.

Chachi: You didn't win a game after that. Then you lost a bunch in a row.

Todd: Very streaky. I don't know if I answered your question.

Taylor: Did you start fantasy footballing because the guys in Green Day were doing it, too?

Todd: [laughs] I started smoking because of Green Day. No, Jason, we email each other a lot and were talking about certain fantasy things. [laughter] You know, like lingerie. "Speaking about boners by yourself, I got this fantasy football league." It was really fun until I started losing. I felt like the king shit of Fuck Mountain and then, all of a sudden, boom. This guy texts. That's it.

Taylor: Jimmy, why did you change your name to Jimmy Jackets?

Jimmy: It was thrust upon me, more or less. It was a good thing; something that started as a joke then developed into an every day kind of thing.

Taylor: What was the joke?

Chachi: You go by that now?

Jimmy: For the most part, yeah. If I meet a girl or something. Here's how I remember it. I hadn't really hung out with Toys That Kill before I was able to tour with them. I'd practiced with them prior to a two-month tour they did where Denis Fleps, the old drummer, played the first month of the West Coast, and I flew into Minneapolis to play the second. The first time we got to hang out, bond, and drink together was there at the Triple Rock. It was an evolution. There was the drummer of DRI (Felix Griffin). I don't know.

Todd: Heavy metal fantasy.

Chachi: Jimmy Thrash.

Jimmy: Then Laila (longtime Pedroian) comes into it in New York and solidifies the whole thing.

Matt Army: By the time you got to New York, when I met you, you were Jimmy.

Jimmy: That morning that I met you, that's when it happened.

Taylor: Wait, your first name isn't Jimmy? I was wondering when your last name Thrash became Jackets.

Jimmy: No. [laughter] Everything I lose is my last name, basically. Jackets.

Chachi: I always know there's an extra one in the van for me because we wear the same size.

Taylor: I'm confused now.

Todd: His real name's not Jimmy, but doesn't he look like a Jimmy?

Taylor: Totally.

Todd: That's how it started. I said, "You look like a Jimmy" and everyone started calling me "Tooth Chip" and "Thrash." By the time we got to New York, Laila joined us, and I said, "Doesn't he look like a Jimmy?" I kept calling you Jimmy. She's like, "Why are you calling him Jimmy?" really loud, and then she just started calling you Jimmy and that was it.

Jimmy: I remember walking into a room. She's like, "Hey Jimmy" and everyone started laughing. That was the moment. I remember when you guys used to call people Pocky and Jimmy just as a random name for people.

Todd: Laila bought a box of Pocky at the Japanese market. It's that easy.

Taylor: Chachi, I first met as Casey, but his real name is Salvatore.

Chachi: Casey's my middle name.

Taylor: Chachi's from not wearing sleeves, right?

Chachi: I guess. Hal Ba Dal named me Chachi.

Matt Army: Who named Hal Ba Dal "Hal Ba Dal"? [laughter]

Todd: I remember the day he started calling you Chachi. I think you were playing pinball at his house.

Chachi: Sleeveless or something?

Todd: Yeah.

Chachi: It didn't really stick until Hal Ba Dal's girlfriends started calling me Chachi.

Jimmy: Girlfriends. [laughter]

Chachi: In a matter of month or two, he had two different girls.

Todd: Shelly, the one who would introduce herself by squeezing breast milk out at you.

Taylor: Was she pregnant at the time?

Todd: No.

Jimmy: Just horny. [laughter]

Taylor: Permanently lactating?

Chachi: I think she might have been pregnant right before we met her.

[Hal Ba Dal walks through the front door.]

Taylor: How'd Chachi get his nickname?

Hal Ba Dal: On the porch one morning on Fourth Street, I looked up and I'd seen Chachi roll up on me with a bicycle. No sleeves with a tan. Golden. Leather chest... There's really no beer here?

Taylor: All right, Todd, you spent \$15,000 on the last FYP record.

Todd: Just recording it.

Taylor: How much did you spend on recording *Bird Roughs*?

Todd: Basically nothing. [laughter] I kicked down cash to Joel who recorded it.

Taylor: So what have you learned in that timeframe?

Todd: That you shouldn't spend \$15,000 recording a fucking record. It's that simple.

Chachi: You're still paying it off, right?

Todd: Pretty much. The thing is, back then, that was kind of a cheap record for industry standards. That's what they kept telling me. I had a budget. I usually never have budgets. I had a \$5,000 budget because the other few records before that, they took that much money to record.

Taylor: We have to put it into perspective, too. Home recording...

Todd: Wasn't around. ProTools: that was something studios had, not every house in America.

Taylor: All the prices and expenses for putting out one's own music independently has shifted over into other areas. You really have to pay attention to how much music costs to press and ship it out, while alerting people that it's available.

Todd: It's one of those things where I hate even thinking about it. I don't really have too many regrets—except for a lot of things—but one that costs fifteen grand: I could have had a total, ready-to-go studio here. Sixteen-track tape machines are now five hundred dollars on Craigslist. You could have a really, really good studio for fifteen grand, not to record just one record that you're really not entirely happy about. You can record everything for the rest of your life. Live and learn.

Taylor: Since 1988, when the first FYP demo was, how much music technology has fundamentally changed?

Todd: It's weird because it almost seems like it went back. When I recorded the first demo tapes and the first 7", which was pretty much a 4-track that they still sell and they're still pretty cool. If you had a 4-track like I had back then, nowadays, you can get it to work really, really good. Outboard gear, all this stuff. You can make it work, like you do recording through a computer. It's weird how I've experienced it all, as far as recording goes. The \$15,000 session is the one that I really didn't like. I really liked recording the first 7" by myself, but it sounds like shit. I had fun. I didn't spend that much money. I had a savings from skateboarding, just to buy 4-tracks and guitars. That's all I needed. I didn't use any amps. I plugged directly into the 4-track because I didn't know you needed an amp to do it. You can hear it. It's the worst-sounding thing probably pressed on vinyl, but I liked it at the time, so that's all that matters.

Taylor: Sometimes, it's worth having an audio postcard of what you did at one time.

Todd: I thought it was just going to be boxes of furniture for the rest of my life, so it's kind of cool that it started something I can still do nowadays.

Taylor: Going to *Bird Roughs*, where are Jack Blast's vocals on that record? The first time I saw Underground Railroad, you and Jack almost had dual vocals and the record is a much different experience from what I was hearing from you guys live.

Todd: You mean Jack's vocals sound low?

Taylor: Yep.

Todd: Well, it was kinda weird with Jack doing vocals. Where he stood to the mic, everything came out like that. I remember Joel kept saying, "Stand right here." Jack's like, "No, that's the way I want to do this."

Taylor: Far away from the mic and low?

Todd: Yeah, yeah. It's kind of like one of those things where it's kind of a good signature for what he does.

Taylor: So he's the hype man? He's your Croatian Flava Flav?

Todd: Yeah. Without the clock. He can't tell time.

Taylor: What happened in Georgia prior to Fest 7?

Jimmy: We'd just dropped off Joel in Atlanta. We went to go get some Chinese food. It was good. I remember at the end of the dinner and we're leaving, someone tossed a fortune cookie and it fell on the floor.

Chachi: Bad omen.

Jimmy: Two hours later, we're right in Macon County and they pulled us over. Had dogs. Pulled Todd out immediately.

Chachi: You know who's from Macon? Little Richard.

Taylor: Otis Redding has a statue there.

Todd: I woke up this morning and there was a movie on called *Return to Macon County*.

Taylor: Stax Records was in Macon, too.

Jimmy: They isolate Todd.

Chachi: I'm in Athens, on tour with The Arrivals.

Todd: It's just me, Jimmy, and Jack Blast.

Jimmy: Jack and I had smoked, maybe, an hour before then.

Todd: You guys were smoking weed. I was driving and I remember hearing both of you say, "Oh, we need to get some more."

Jimmy: We were running really low.

Todd: If I ever have to go back for a retrial, "I thought they needed more weed, so I wasn't telling no lies." I really thought they didn't have any weed in there. The cops asked, "Is there anything in there? If there is, we'll give you a ticket and send you on your way. If you lie and we find it..." I'm saying, "No, there's nothing." Next thing you know, the dogs are jumping through the van and they find trivial amounts of marijuana.

Matt Army: "They've *alleged* to have found."

Jimmy: No, they fuckin' found it. I don't have any defense at this point. They asked both Jack and me if we had any. They gave us the same proposition. "We'll give you a ticket or not. We'll arrest you if the dogs act up." We're like, "No, we don't have it." So the dogs started jumping around. They're like, "Guys, get out." They pulled us right out and they started rummaging through the van. They pulled my bag out. "Who's is this?" "It's mine." They put it right on the hood of the car and they just started pulling things out of it. The reason I'm really in trouble is because I had mushrooms in there.

Todd: Jimmy had a dildo. [laughter] We didn't know this about you.

Jimmy: It was a pipe, man. So, they pulled my weed out. The first cop pulled mushrooms out and put it back in. Pulled the pipe out as well. Left the mushrooms in there. They were still going through the van. They pulled out Jack's stuff. The other cop, the real dickhead of the bunch, Officer Willis, he goes back to my bag and gives it a real thorough look-through and pulls out my pants, through my pockets, my chonies—which are pretty dirty—so he sees the mushrooms and he's like, "Oh." And he pulls them out. I didn't realize at that point, but that was the reason I got really in trouble; in two states in the United States—California and Georgia—mushrooms are a felony. That's what they got me on. We went to jail.

Todd: I went for two days because I was driving.

Jimmy: They even said you weren't going to jail.

Todd: If there was some sort of efficiency manager overlooking this whole thing, those guys would be fired. Officer Willis from Macon County—Bibb County, I think it was—is the worst motherfucker. And not only is he terrible, he doesn't give a fuck of what happened to you. They don't know what they're doing, either. So that made it even worse. The whole time, they were saying, "You're going to have to pick these guys up tomorrow because they're spending the night in jail," and I was like, "Cool." The whole time, I'm thinking, "Okay. This is fucked up, but nothing bad's going to happen." Me and Jack Blast ended up being in there for two days. We even got sent to the lockdown the second day.

Jimmy: Hours after I got out.

Todd: He got out before us because he was in the most in trouble. Chachi was driving through with The Arrivals.

Chachi: And I bailed 'em out.

Todd: This story's kind of complex, but he just happened to be driving by.

Chachi: I was in Athens when I talked to you guys and you guys were in Atlanta and they were driving South. And that day I was driving to Atlanta. They were two hours south of Atlanta.

Todd: Jimmy got out because he needed to get out.

Jimmy: Because I would have been there for weeks.

Chachi: This is Thursday night when I caught wind of this. Todd and Jack were going to see a judge on Friday and Jimmy wasn't going to see a judge for who knows when. All Todd and Jack had were little misdemeanor charges. I called the jail and sweet-talked the lady into letting me talk to one of them.

Jimmy: That was good.

Chachi: She put Todd on. "What do I need to do?" He's like, "Get Jimmy out. Me and Jack, we'll just stay another night 'cause we're going to see a judge in the morning and Jimmy's fucked."

Jimmy: That was the worst night.

Todd: We actually got put in the striped suits. And we walked into this room and everyone's making cat calls. I saw *Shawshank Redemption*—get our ass kicked by the guards. They're going to make me cry. I thought Jack was going to totally start busting up. So if I fuckin' start crying, Jack's going to

Taylor: How did the Sunken City happen?

Chachi: Erosion.

Taylor: Explain what Sunken City is.

Chachi: It was a street next to the park that they built between 1900-1920 or something. Shortly after they built it, the road started crumbling and falling into the ocean. It's still going.

Taylor: And there's a bakery there.

Chachi: Little foundations and stuff. I've seen pictures of the old houses and stuff when it was a full street.

Taylor: There are palm trees every ten feet or so along the side of the street.

Chachi: It's like Paseo Del Mar. It's the same thing.

Taylor: San Pedro has a lobster fest. What's the difference between West Coast lobsters and East Coast lobsters?

Chachi: East Coast lobsters have claws and the ones here, they don't.

Taylor: So they import the ones from the East Coast....

Chachi: For the lobster fest. If you go to Mexico, you get lobster tail, not claws.

Hal Ba Dal: Langoustine.

Taylor: Do you know any heavyweight social activists who came out of San Pedro?

Hal Ba Dal: Nada. She's the smartest person I know.

Todd: Howard Zinn?

Taylor: He's a Bostonian.

Todd: Tony Danza?

Taylor: Have you guys heard of Joe Hill?





So if I fuckin' start crying,

Jack's going to shit his pants and cry.

shit his pants and cry. It ended up being good. Everybody was just fuckin' around. They were totally fucking with us. Dudes would be running into my room, going "We're totally butt fucking your friend right now!" I'm all, "Don't!" They'd be all, "Dude, just fucking with you." [laughter] And they did the same thing to Jack and you hear him going, "Nooooo!" The guys ended up being really cool, but the establishment, the people who worked there, were beyond incompetent. I understand why they're assholes, because they have to deal with assholes all day.

For two days they never fingerprinted me. They didn't even book me until I went in asking for information and they couldn't find me in the computer. They hadn't even booked me. I could have been not in there. But in there. I could have stayed in there forever. The whole thing was bullshit. I'm glad it happened now because it's a funny story.

Chachi: Well, we'll see what happens to Jimmy.

Jimmy: Chachi bailed me out. A great friend.

Todd: We got out with barely enough time to play our Fest set. Glory-filled and nerve-wracking at the same time, because I thought I was still in jail when we were playing. "There is something really wrong with this."

Taylor: Going back to *Bird Roughs*. *Bird Roughs* sounds familiar to me. What is one riff that you straight-up stole? I'm looking at Todd and Jimmy.

Jimmy: Drum-wise? Oh, yeah. Easily. Adam Ant.

Chachi: "Kings of the Wild Frontier."

Todd: But that's not stealing. That's a tribute.

Chachi: It's just a little part. It's not the whole song.

Todd: That was going to be one of the first covers that we were going to do.

Jimmy: That's right.

Taylor: There are parts of *Bird Roughs* where I know that I've heard bits of this before. Homage. That's the word I'm looking for. It's not all the way through.

Todd: The end of "Living in a Straw" is "Bastards of Young" (The Replacements), but on *Bird Roughs* it's not. The riff, we kinda just turned it backwards. We always play that song like that. That's the whole weird thing about this starting as a cover band. At first, all the songs had incorporated some other song. It was one of those things where we didn't really think about it. It was just kind of fun to do at practice.

Taylor: So why the costumes?

Jimmy: It's fun.

Todd: Next.

Taylor: So, what was the genesis of the costumes?

Todd: The first time we went to Japan there were stores with human costumes.

Taylor: Was it around Halloween?

Began his labor organizing years in San Pedro. **Chachi:** He's from here? The Wobblies.

Taylor: There's also a woman, Yuri Kochiyama, who was a civil rights activist and a Nobel Peace prize nominee. She held up Malcolm X's body after he'd been assassinated. Both from San Pedro. They should teach you that shit in school, man... Tell me why there's no longer a large Japanese population in San Pedro.

Chachi: They were all taken away during

World War II. Most of them were on Terminal Island, though.

Todd: They had concentration camps for Japanese people.

Chachi: Before the war, it was a fishing community. Terminal Island is between San Pedro and Long Beach.

Todd: The museum down there pretty much details it. It's really fucked up.

Chachi: During World War II, they all got sent to internment camps. They didn't kill

them. They took them out to the desert. Manzanar. You were in prison.

Todd: The photos look really gnarly.

Taylor: San Pedro has the two largest European concentrations of...

Chachi: Croatians and Italians.

Taylor: It has the largest Croatian population facing the Pacific. I wish Jack Blast was here to answer that one.

Chachi: I work with most of them. Cleveland has a lot of Croatians, too.

Todd: No. It was March. Springtime. The cherry blossoms are coming out. People want to dress up like bunnies. We walked into that store called Don Quixote. It's my favorite store. It's probably the Wal-Mart of Japan. It's a multi-level store. It's really tight in there. There's this section where they have all these uniforms and costumes. "We're playing in these. Fuck it." We ended up doing it every show in Japan. If we didn't do it, it was not going to be as fun. Jimmy was a soccer field.

Jimmy: It was a green body suit with a white velcro piece on my chest and a white velcro piece over my nuts. There were balls that came with it, so the crowd could throw them at me and get stuck. But they went all over the place.

Chachi: If he had question marks all over it, he could have been The Riddler.

Jimmy: Or the infomercial dudes.

Taylor: So, what's the latest or funniest misunderstanding you've had when you've been really high?

Chachi: Huh. Like every day.

Jimmy: I think that may have been the title *Underground Railroad to Candyland*.

Chachi: I don't remember. I was high.

Todd: I don't remember what Fest it was. It was probably Fest III; it was one of those fuckin' Fests when the bearded guys were there and shit. It was one hung-over, smokin' weed, watching TV Monday afternoon. We're all sitting around a house and Paddy (Costello, Dillinger Four, Arrivals) was there and he orders a bunch of pizzas, and we were watching an underground railroad documentary. I'm at this level where I hear this lady say, "underground railroad to Candyland." "Did she just say what I thought she said?" Paddy just started laughing really

hard. "You've gotta call the next Toys That Kill record *Underground Railroad to Candyland*." I'm like, "Oh, dude." That name just stuck in my head. But it really was "underground railroad to Canada."

Taylor: How important is television to your songwriting process?

Todd: It's the main ingredient besides the other thing we talked about. I think it's the relaxing thing. At the end of the day when I'm done being the ambassador for the kids, I unwind. I sit here. Most likely, I'll pick up the guitar. There's no way I can write songs just being totally like a normal guy. "Okay, I gotta write songs. I'm going to go into a room and I'll come out with a couple." There's no way I could do that. If somebody told me to do that, I would jump out the window or something. Something funny has to be going on. Even the bitter, angry songs, something funny is going on when I'm doing them. I just feel like there's also someone in here with me if I'm here playing guitar by myself. If it's all silent and I'm just playing guitar, then there's some sort of pressure that I don't like. I don't respond good to that.

Taylor: So, in a way, you can say that television is like a muse or a friend?

Todd: Yeah. It definitely is. I love television. It's great, especially on my thirty-two inch. There's no doubt about it. For years, I felt ashamed because I know every magazine I opened up, TV's the devil and the government's the devil and all this stuff. I agree with a lot of stuff like that, but there's no way in hell that I could deny liking TV. I love it and it helps me. If I just watch regular TV, I'd be super bored. I get pissed off a lot about it, but I think it helps me. Some lyrics come out of it.

Taylor: I think the main thing is that you're being creative as a response to a stimulus

instead of just sitting there and it deadens you out.

Todd: It does do that, too, but I just know that 99.9 percent of the songs that I write, the TV's on and I'm sitting right here. That point one percent song, I can't even tell you the last time that happened.

Taylor: What's the largest monetary sacrifice you've had to make to be in a band?

Jimmy: Well, I quit a job to go on tour.

Chachi: I put up a bunch of money to bail him out. I lost a van in the past. Just left it in St. Louis. Jimmy's first tour with us, Toys That Kill, D4.

Todd: I lost a couple vans. I mean, pretty much my whole life. \$15,000 on one record. Let's look at the whole lifespan.

Taylor: The first Toys That Kill record, didn't you sell your VW?

Todd: That's nothing. If you didn't bring it up right now, I would have never thought of that and I loved that car. VW Fastback. Because we had to get out to Austin, too. It's weird. I hear people that I played with, they tell me how much they sacrifice to be in whatever band I'm in at the time. One second, I'm like, "Yeah, yeah. Totally. I see what you're saying." Because I probably get more out of it than you, so I can't really think of it like that. But, at the same time, it's like, "Dude." I'm laughing at you. It's not even close. I'm still thirty grand in debt, and that's just from what's going on right now. I don't really see it as sacrifices. I don't know what else I'm going to do.

Taylor: So, what's the largest life sacrifice you've done for it? Emotional or something you've given up that has nothing to do with money.

Todd: Just a normal lifestyle. I don't see that as a sacrifice, though. I can't think of something that's really hurt me.



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Expectations can ruin anything.

Chachi: Strained relationships with girlfriends.

Jimmy: Sometimes that's for the better.

Chachi: Not having a normal routine like everyone else. Everyone at my work trips out that I'll go somewhere for a couple weeks.

Taylor: Todd, did you ever find out what "suey" means?

Todd: It's a pig call. They used to call me that as a kid because I was fat. And I didn't know what it meant, so I'd ask my mom and my mom would lie to me because she didn't want my feelings to get hurt. I knew she knew. Some kid told me, "It's a pig call, fatass." Those kids I hung out with when I was a kid were ruthless. They did not give a shit.

Taylor: When's the last time you've lost a friend because of the music that you play?

Todd: Oh, I know. This is kind of what you're asking. Old pro skater Jeremy Klein. Me and him used to be best friends. Me and him used to spend the night at each other's houses and just sit up all night, eating candy. Go skating at six in the morning and do it all day and then just do the same thing. Almost every day we would hang out. Then I started getting into music. I bought the 4-track. He'd even do backup vocals, "Yeah, all right. Let's go skate. C'mon." I kinda like got more into this. One day, I remember, I was recording a song and he came in and said, "Fuck you." And that was it. We weren't friends anymore.

Taylor: Jimmy, how do you let "cougar-aged" women down easily when they want to help you tear down your drum kit?

Jimmy: It depends on my state of mind.

Todd: His catchphrase is "Tear it down and take it off, stroke the shaft, and jiggle the balls. In that order." [laughter]

Jimmy: Yeah. I don't know. It wasn't me. What did I do? I don't remember that situation at all.

Todd: I was playing pinball at the BrewCo., and these two ladies really, really wanted your sweaty attention, Jimmy. You were actively fending off two ladies in their forties.

Jimmy: Chachi's mom?

Todd: No, no. She's very nice, but that wasn't one of the ladies.

Chachi: Could have been one of her friends.

Jimmy: We played with The Dwarves years ago... I met this lady. I had a night with her.

Taylor: A sexual night?

Jimmy: Yeah. A week later, I'm at work, walking through the hallways. My phone rings. It was a number that I don't recognize, and I pick it up. "Hello?" And someone says, "Is this Jimmy?" "Yeah." "This is Jonnie. You had sex with my mom!" I look at my phone. I'm freaking out. It's Todd. He freaked me the fuck out.

Todd: He screamed, "Why are you doing that?!" That was the first time in my whole life that I really, really fucked somebody up.

Jimmy: I do like older women, though.

Taylor: Jimmy, what type of drumming are you incapable of?

Jimmy: I think probably more jazzy stuff. There's some stuff, probably in the last week or two, that I need to learn how to do better. Maybe with a lighter touch.

Todd: No. It's good loud.

Jimmy: It's good loud, but it can be good to be groovy.

Todd: What? [in hippie voice] "What are you angry about?" I think he's capable of learning anything. There's been some new stuff lately. "Hey, can you do this?" And you do it right off the bat and you've never done it before.

Jimmy: I like to push myself and try to learn new things. It'll take me some time to learn something, probably. I have a lot to learn. There's no doubt about that.

Matt Army: Gene Krupa, syncopated style.

Jimmy: Buddy Rich. There are a lot of things I want to try.

Taylor: So, how can expectations ruin a band?

Jimmy: Guns'n'Roses?

Todd: Expectations can ruin anything, actually. It puts something you're not welcoming of into the whole situation. You expect a certain thing out of something when you should just appreciate it for what it is, or it's going to ruin it. You take it one day at a time. If you expect anything out of it, you're not going to get it—I don't think—unless you're really good at getting what you want.

Taylor: How is being in this band "spiritually worthwhile"? You're not getting paid that much. You really have to force being in a band around a lot of obligations. Why is it so important that you're in a band that doesn't—in society's larger scope—give you those material comforts?

Jimmy: It feeds the soul. Friendship. My best friends have been created by being in bands.

Todd: It would be a lot different if we didn't like each other. There would be no way I could do it with anyone I didn't like, let alone a whole band where it's this big business thing.

Chachi: You always hear about bands that don't like each other. Every other band that we've toured with, if we switch out a member for a drive, everyone's all, "Man, you guys have so much fun in here." We're just hanging out.

Todd: We're not having fun because we're making all of this money on tour. A lot of it is out of our own pocket. It even goes back to the whole expectations thing. No one expects to be at sound check on time, or have their guitar strung up by some dude, or making a certain amount of money at a certain amount of time. We want to make money doing this, but, right now, it's not in the cards, but that has nothing to do with it. It has nothing to do with what you're talking about—feeding the soul. Whoever said "feeding the soul," I'm into it. I think the best feeling I get is actually writing a song. And when we all play together, I never expected the sound like that. It's double. If it stopped right there and we never even played or toured, it would still be fulfilling. We all know, "This is cool." And when it's not cool, we don't really play it anymore. If it didn't go to that level of getting to go to Japan, it would still be fulfilling. Everything else is all these cherries on top.

Chachi: Or signing your life away to make a buck.

Taylor: It's a lot different coming from someone saying that after fifteen years straight doing what you do, instead of someone who's just starting out.

Todd: I guess we're not demanding that this be our careers. We would accept it with open arms. But, that's the whole thing. When there are pressures and expectations, it's always going to fuck it up. Someone's going to want it faster than the other guy.





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RAZORCAKE

REMEMBRANCES

—FROM THE TRENCHES

Razorcake is absolutely nothing without its over one hundred volunteer contributors. Although filled with humor, the “thank you” list on the editorial page of every issue is a tip of the hat to every person who helped us out in the two-month span since the last issue. This list isn’t an empty gesture. It’s a sincere and humble thanks to the people who took time out of their busy lives to sweat a little with us, to write for us, to input data for us, to use their brains and their talents with us, so Razorcake does not merely continue, but grow, get stronger, and go in directions none of us can fully predict. Some people have been thanked in all fifty-one issues.

In a Studs Terkelian way, I wanted a brief oral history of Razorcake from the people who are directly involved in its creation. These postcard-length remembrances are like snapshots flicked onto a table, each with a slightly different focus and content. Over eight-and-a-half years have passed and, as the editor, I don’t want to forget how Razorcake started, where we’ve come from, and how we’re all setting our sights on what’s next.

—Todd Taylor

It was 2:15 PM, Saturday, October 7, 2000. It was our first staff meeting for *Razorcake*. Since the August benefit show at The Garage for *Flipside*, we, former *Flipside* contributors, were fluctuating in Purgatory, individually wondering about our collective fate.

I walked into Canter’s Deli in Los Angeles, using the door by the bakery. I didn’t recognize anyone, so I navigated past the deli counter and into the main dining room. A couple dozen unassuming punks commanded the center of the large room, already engaged in earnest discussion. They were seated around several tables that had been pulled together to accommodate our large group.

There was room for everyone, chairs evenly spaced—Todd must have called ahead. He, like Canter’s, was ready for us. It was planned and orderly, just like the plans our editor-in-chief had prepared. Todd grinned and gestured for me to come over, Designated Dale and Donofthedeade waved.

Nam pulled me into a seat near her and Jim tipped his hat. Those I didn’t recognize by sight, I recognized by name.

I’d known them for two years; most of them had known each other far longer. I always feel welcome and at ease with this motley crowd. We have a common focus and desire—to document the gamut of punk music, etc., with our writing, photography, illustrations, and other skills.

Never one to over commit and under deliver, Todd sent just a few emails outlining his plans for a modest new zine. That afternoon, *Razorcake* was born and we gave shape and form to the framework that Todd Taylor, Sean Carswell, Skinny Dan, and others had built in the scant time it took summer to turn into fall.

It was dusk when we spilled onto the sidewalk, full of beer, bagels, chips, and renewed purpose. Whatever Todd had in mind, it would be well supported and deftly executed. I smoked a cigarette on the sidewalk and flicked the butt far across Fairfax Ave. The cherry bounced down the asphalt and cars zipped by, headed to unknown destinations. Excitement clung to the crisp fall air. This was definitely going to work.

—Jessica T.

Fifty issues of anything is quite an accomplishment. I’m proud to be a part of *Razorcake* the magazine and *Razorcake* the crew. I know of no finer group of talented peers with whom I’d like to be associated.

My laundry list of ‘Cake memories starts with a bummed Todd taking some time off after *Flipside* folded, only to return as a reinvigorated Todd telling me his grand plan for the new mag with a weird name that he was gonna start with Sean. My fondest memories, though, are rooted in the life that has happened outside the actual process of magazine making:

- Driving around Highland Park with Todd, looking for apartments to rent. Don’t remember if he found what became (until recently) *Razorcake* Central that excursion, but a quasi-tradition of getting together to eat Mexican grub began that day with a stop at Chico’s. We’ve been friends prior and since that morning, but that trip also marked the

first and last time I've ever seen the brother with a cell phone on his person.

• The first *Razorcake* staff meeting. Wall-to-wall punks of varied stripes taking up every bit of free floor space in *Razorcake* Central 1.0, getting to know each other and just shooting the breeze. It was a bit of an eye opener to physically see in one place just how many folks were putting time into each issue. Don't remember if there was Fidel's Pizza and beer involved (my fuzzy memory tells me there probably was), but I do wish I'd thought to bring a camera with me. The staff has since grown so much that I figure to attempt such an endeavor today would involve the coordination of multiple international flights, hotel accommodations, and the bulk of the entire backyard of *Razorcake* Central 2.0. And a wide-angle lens, come to think of it.

Methinks one cannot have a vibrant magazine without a vibrant community existing to make it come to life. Each bi-monthly issue and related project is a multilayered peek into one corner of the punk/underground subculture as well as the sub-subculture that has coalesced to make the magazine a reality. I think it's pretty clear that most of us are having a helluva lotta fun.

I can't wait to see the hundredth.

—Jimmy Alvarado

Three Random Thoughts Concerning *Razorcake*

1. It's only been eight-and-a-half years since the first issue. It's easy to remember, since photos of my son ran in the early editions. At the time, he liked/reacted positively to the punk music I played around him. These days he's tolerant of punk, but prefers to listen to bands like Kiss, Judas Priest, Motörhead, Venom, and Motley Crüe. Times have changed, which is fine by me. Kids need to cut their own paths and not follow directly in their parents' footsteps. I would much rather my son listen to Slayer than garbage like Britney Spears or *Highschool Musical*.

2. What I find interesting is the amount of changes that have occurred in the past eight-and-a-half years. When *Razorcake* started, CDs reigned supreme; the physical format was still viable; downloads had yet to exist, there was no MySpace, your favorite song was not a ringtone, there were less subgenres of punk, fanzines and flyers were still the dominant source of information, the first wave of powerviolence had crested, Y2K thrash was in its ascendancy, and Tragedy started making the rounds. Then Y2K thrash gave way to retro punk and hardcore bands going for more of a '70s hard rock angle, a million bands wanted to sound like Tragedy, country punk has seen a resurgence, pop punk is reinventing itself, powerviolence is starting to resurface, and who knows what's next. Not to mention *Razorcake* now has podcasts. I predict next we'll have television shows.

3. In a place like Los Angeles, where a lot of folks are chasing after the next big thing, it's nice to see something like *Razorcake* existing, and making its own way. I doubt you'll see any *Razorcake* events sponsored

by Converse any time soon. And that's a good thing. Further proof of "if you don't like what's on, create your own channels." The whole punk thing of sticking to your guns and not giving in to corporate money should still hold, despite what some say and do. Integrity is never outdated. Bullshit, on the other hand, ages fast and gets tossed on the heap with all that has come before, only to be forgotten.

—Matt Average

I freely tell people I know nothing about photography. Never took a class. I like my motto: *Not a photographer, but I like to take pictures*. Taking pictures kind of happened by accident. I used to do live reviews at the bigger shows, and I would try to take pictures to accompany my column. I got burned out on the writing part, dealing with the rules of the clubs, and dealing with publicity people to get everything coordinated. Well, actually, I would ask Todd to do it, but I hated having him do more than he already does.

A new wave of DIY venues started to pop up, giving the opportunity for more touring bands to come through Los Angeles. I searched online and started going to these new places. I brought the camera along and started documenting what I was experiencing. This opened a new world to me and I got really excited about taking pictures. I was meeting new people and actually felt like a part of the scene again. After a twenty-year hiatus, my wife also started going to shows again. It's cool to listen to bands at home on the stereo, but the live experience can be breathtaking.

The *Razorcake* website gave me an outlet to display and share my newfound hobby. Some people might hate it, but it's not the picture-taking that I love, it's working on those pictures on the computer. It's my geekiness. For the website, I make these filmstrip-type layouts to display the bands. Coming up with a new one for every show is fun: picking a background and deciding what color scheme I'm going to use; going through the pictures of the show and cropping, sizing, flipping the image to black and white; making adjustments. Seeing the end result is my ultimate rush.

We're not the cool peeps who everybody wants to be attached to. We're the nerds who are fanatical about the music and will be in it for the long haul.

—Donofthead

It's all the Rhythm Chicken's fault! I was at his house one night when we were both in Milwaukee—I believe we were on our way to get shitfaced at the Cactus Club—and he showed me a copy of this new zine that was coming out of Los Angeles. I was impressed. Later, it was still the Rhythm Chicken's fault! I had moved to Kalamazoo, and he mentioned via email that *Razorcake* was looking for reviewers. I dropped a line to Todd Taylor (whose initials are notably not in sync with the Rhythm Chicken or *Razorcake* or me), which would still be the Rhythm Chicken's fault, and offered my services. Four years later finds me still making vain attempts at

credible and engaging reviews for a rag that I am very proud to be associated with.

—The Lord Kveldulfr

I first became aware of *Razorcake* (like many other things) through Dave Quinn of Tiltwheel. Davey and I and some other folks were playing an acoustic Christmas show December 2001 at the Social Club And Gallery, an art gallery turned speakeasy run by Andy Tomsy and his girlfriend in downtown San Diego. The night after the acoustic show, I knew Tiltwheel was going to play up in Anaheim at Chain Reaction with Total Chaos. It sounded like a ridiculous enough show that I wanted to go. So, at the acoustic Christmas show I asked Davey if he could get me into their show the next night. Davey stops and asks, who I discover to be Todd Taylor, if he can get me in. Todd says sure thing, and hands me a copy of *Razorcake* #4, featuring Ian MacKaye on the cover. I still have it.

The next night a friend and I made the trek up to Anaheim for the show. At the show, I soon discovered there is *Razorcake* spoken word in addition to the regularly scheduled festivities for the evening. Rich Mackin would be reading from his newly published book, *Dear Mr. Mackin*. Rich read a series of letters to and from the Lever 2000 company, in which he attempts to have the Lever 2000 powers-that-be honestly answer his question regarding Lever 2000's claims to clean all of the body's 2000 parts, when, really, doesn't the soap clean the skin, and isn't the skin really just one part? The teenage parrot punks get antsy and they start to boo. Rich quips, "What was I thinking talking about soap at a punk rock show?" Brilliant retort. The kids then shout for him to get off the stage, so Rich obliges, reading the rest of his letters and stories on the floor, amongst the gaggle of Orange County's finest, brattiest, charged punks. As soon as he finishes reading his letters, Rich gets back up on stage to introduce Tiltwheel as "All the way from England, Complete And Total Chaos!"

—Jeff Proctor

I might not call myself a writer, but I have always written. Writing was just something I did, like breathing. But to actually put words out there, other than on a lyric sheet, never crossed my mind much. That changed when a friend started up his own zine called *Motion Sickness*, but once he stopped publishing I was left with no place to continue the habit. Around the same time he stopped publishing, a friend gave me a copy of *Razorcake* because he knew I was a huge Adolescents fan and that I would dig reading an interview with them.

After reading the interview, I read the rest of the zine and found that I totally dug it. I was making plans for a trip to L.A. because the Adolescents were playing at some huge KROQ show. I thought it would be cool to write a story about my trip and contacted Todd about the idea. Since then, I have turned in several stories. Of all the stories I have written, the one I was most thankful to get out was about a girl I met in East Berlin. After that story was posted on the website, I actually got



to hang out and spend the day skating with Todd and Sean. Inbetween runs, Sean asked me about the story and gave me some really cool positive feed back on it. That was a great moment because, as I stated at the beginning, I never considered myself a writer. I just write. At that moment, I remember thinking, maybe I can write. And this is the thing I love most about punk rock. First, meeting people who I would have never met otherwise and second, finding out I can do things I never would have really thought about doing. I want to thank *Razorcake*, Todd, and Sean for giving me the opportunity to write for them as well as read a great zine every other month.

up, funny as hell. It gave me a chance to see that our ethical Venn diagrams overlapped as much as our cultural ones did.

We went to dinner and talked about The Bananas. That fall Sean stayed with my wife and me when he toured the East Coast. We talked about Sam Cooke. The following spring Todd asked me to tour with him. We talked about Molly Ivins. It fell into place that easily.

Razorcake is extended family now. Only these guys send six Christmas cards a year, and they let me know when there's a new Marked Men or M.O.T.O. record. As much as I appreciate the annual newsletter I receive from my Uncle Knowlton and Aunt Connie, even they can't claim that.

—Mike Faloan

Somewhere around 2003, my friend Dustin introduced me to a zine called *Razorcake* done by "That ReTodd guy from *Flipside*" that he thought was really good. He gave me a copy (issue #16), and I quickly fell in love with everything about it. I ordered a bunch of back issues and quickly made my way through all of those.

Being stuck in a small town for a period of time, there was nothing much to do but drink beer and listen to music. It made sense that I'd throw some reviews together. Todd seemed to like them, so I kept writing. My first one appeared in issue #23 and I've had stuff in pretty much every issue ever since. I think my favorite might be the *Razorcake* debut of my daughter Sophia on the opening page of issue #36. She rules!

Over the last five or so years that *Razorcake* has been a part of my life, I have been introduced to some of the best bands I've ever heard. I cannot thank Todd and Sean enough for putting this thing together for that reason alone. I truly can't imagine my life without the likes of Riverboat Gamblers, Marked Men, Radon, Clorox Girls, Regulations, Dan Padilla, Tim Version, Bloodbath & Beyond... The list goes on and on.

The more I think about it, the more I realize that *Razorcake* has played a major part in my life, and for that I'd like to crack a beer and crank the stereo and scream "THANKS!" over the music to Todd, Sean, Megan Pants, Designated Dale, Jim Ruland, Nuvia, Maddy, Rhythm Chicken, Ben Snakepit, Art Fuentes, Jimmy Alvarado, Davey Tiltwheel... Hell, anyone and everyone who has done something for *Razorcake*. The bottom line is I really do "heart" drinking beer and listening to records and will do so with any of you at any time. Now, someone hook me up with a copy of issue #7. It's the only one I'm missing!

—Ty Stranglehold

Getting involved with *Razorcake* was the result of one of the biggest mistakes of my life: A grossly negligent ignoring of all the signs that screamed and red flags that flapped "DON'T DO THIS!" I moved to England with a woman I had known a mere nine months, and to whom I had become hitched two days prior to our departure. Nine months was the absolute limit of the

coping skills she had developed to mask her long untreated mental illness. As soon as we landed, there were crying jags, dinner plates flung wildly round the flat, and ambulances called because she was home alone and not sure if she could refrain from hurting herself. Needless to say, things didn't work out. I was stuck 6,000 miles from home, nearly broke, and had nothing but time on my hands.

My chicken-shit-to-chicken-salad moment came a few months into my stay there. I was "between jobs," living in England illegally, my flat roughly four blocks from a little hole-in-the-wall dive bar called the Windmill on Blenheim Gardens in Brixton. I was walking home from Brockwell Park one day and saw a show flier that made me do a double take: Crypt Records Recording Artists, Little Killers, March 25th, the Windmill. I shit my pants, cleaned up, and made certain plans to attend the show. It was a complete and utter blast (read the review, still up at www.razorcake.org) and, in the following days, I wrote a review of the show, sent it to Todd *unsolicited*, and didn't think much about it.

When I did get word from Todd, it was to forward a piece of hate mail written to me by a staunch supporter of Dragster (see the review for my comments on their abysmal performance), and to ask if I had any more reviews. I was fucking thrilled, and it was the start of a beautiful electronic friendship. I sent more show reviews and Todd asked if I'd review records once I returned to the States, which I did and still do... with moderate consistency.

What means the most to me about writing for *Razorcake* is that, after a decade of being a passive observer of what happened in the underground music scene around me, I became a contributor, however small, to something that I hold dear.

—Josh Benke

Somewhere in the foggy grey area of my life between Gorsky Press agreeing to publish my first novel *Grrrl*, and me becoming a regular contributor to *Razorcake*, my friend Felizon handed me an Unlovables CD. "You'll like this," she said. And, wow, did I ever—so much that I asked Todd if I could interview lead singer Hallie for the magazine. It was the first interview I'd done since my days on the school paper in grade ten. I was nervous. I wondered if Hallie would think I was a gigantic nerd. The interview lasted about an hour, but we stayed on the phone for an additional hour just because we liked talking to each other. A few years later we were sharing a hotel room at Fest. This is what *Razorcake* is to me. Community trumps celebrity. We're all in this together. I've met some of the greatest people I know through the magazine and, at the risk of sounding like, well, a gigantic nerd, I never stop feeling privileged to be a part of it all.

—Jennifer Whiteford

It's safe to say I've had a lot of great experiences with music, made a lot of friends, and my experience with *Razorcake* has been no different. In fact, I've made a

lot of really, really great friends through *Razorcake*. While there're plenty of stories, here's one of the oldest and most surprising to me. After joining the staff in summer '05, I actually met Todd later that year at The Fest. I also met Megan Pants, through mutual friends, and Sunday night, after everything else, the both of us were at the same party, standing in the corner of a crowded porch. Megan came over to talk to me. "So what part of New Jersey are you from?"

I stood there, thinking how no one knew, let alone cared about, my hometown. "Oh, I'm up north, not really by anyone or anything that people have heard of."

"By Bergen County?" she asked, clearly interested. I was stunned.

"Yeah, actually, in Waldwick."

"Oh, my parents grew up in Ho-Ho-Kus," the bordering town.

She told me how she grew up in Maine, but would visit her grandparents every summer. We kept in touch afterwards, and became fairly close. Even stranger, was what happened when she came to visit family about a year later, and we hung out for a while. When she pointed out "Oh, that's my grandparent's old house!" I said, "We're down the street from where I live."

Since then, Megan has force fed me at least once (that I remember), given me advice such as "Just grab her butt," and has knocked sense into me more times than I can remember. She's the older sister I never had growing up. Seriously, thanks to all the friends I've made over the years, and especially to Todd, for giving me the opportunity to get involved in the first place, and for being a better boss than anyone at any "real" job I've had over the years.

—Joe Evans III

Kat Jetson brought *Razorcake* to my attention sometime around 2005. I was looking for a new zine to contribute to; the ones I was writing for felt wrong. (They somehow translated the elitism synonymous with glossy mags into newsprint.) Through Kat, I met Todd Taylor. I sent him some stuff—an interview with Kira Roessler and some record reviews. Two things really struck me about Todd: 1) His tendency to write people back (rare in this game), and 2) his desire to work with writers in the development of their pieces (also somewhat rare—in Marxist terms this is "wasted labor power"). I really learned a lot from Todd. His years reading and developing his editing skills at *Flipside* had paid off.

I think *Razorcake* has reached issue fifty for three reasons.

1) With the patience of a chess player, Todd Taylor has planned (whether he admits it or not—could be totally from his subconscious—indefinitely pleasing the corpse of Andre Breton) the course of *Razorcake*. He has avoided the pitfalls of most fanzines—that good intentions and blind faith will pull you through. As we've seen in recent years,



The odds dictate you're eventually gonna hear something that peels your goddamned ears off and hits you in the face with 'em.

running a fanzine is a lot like navigating a marble maze: The way is peppered with traps that'll end your run at the slightest slipup.

2) *Razorcake* does not subscribe to any style. As Flock Of Seagulls and Gang Of Four's *Hard* album have shown, style comes and goes...only quality remains. (By the way, unlike 99% of Gang of Four fans, I truly like *Hard*.)

3) Without the tireless efforts of numerous people—such as Megan Pants, Daryl Gussin, Jimmy Alvarado, Sean Carswell, etc.—*Razorcake* would not exist. (Big ups to Megan for helping with the non-profit status.)

I don't really write for anyone else anymore because no one offers me the freedom *Razorcake* does. Journalism is no longer a field (maybe it never was?) where one can make a living and still maintain his or her integrity. There are some good rags and websites out there—*Z*, *CounterPunch*, *Monthly Review*, etc. I consider *Razorcake* one of them. Hopefully *Razorcake*'s influence

will spawn similar-minded mags. Here's to the next fifty issues...

—Ryan Leach

At fifty issues, the joy's in the numbers. The odds allow so much room for those seemingly random, long-shot connections to take place.

I got the Pteradon demo for review a few years back. Guys in the band had A.) taped their address to the face of the CD-R, B.) spraypainted it (while getting some paint on the playing surface of the disc) and C.) packaged it poorly enough so that the thing was nearly broken in half by the time it got to me. I wrote all of this down in a brief note and, to my surprise, it actually ran as a review in the next issue.

The next batch of review material I got, there was another copy of the Pteradon demo thrown in. This one was whole, unpainted, tapeless. It also came with a note that essentially said, "Yes, we're idiots. Try this one."

And the odds dictate that with a mag like *Razorcake*, you're eventually gonna hear something that peels your goddamned ears off and hits you in the face with 'em. That six-song demo, with its Xeroxed cover, handwritten liner notes and scrawled CD face, contained some of the most amazing, jaw-dropping music I'd heard in a long time.

Flash-forward a few years. Pteradon guys and I have stayed in touch. Our bands have put on shows for each other in different states. We've drank together, stayed at each other's houses on tour. Turns out that they're some of the nicest, most unassuming, genuine, and humble dudes I've ever met in my life. In short, we've become friends.

It's really not a big deal until you think of the cumulative effect of things like that. The endless possibilities that a magazine like *Razorcake* affords us—not only musically (though at its heart, the 'Cake is a music magazine and I honestly believe they're covering some of the best music being made

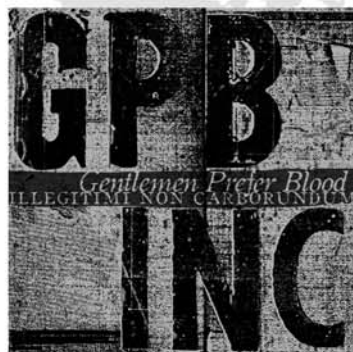
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right now), but for that opportunity for real, person-to-person connection.

Sometimes the odds just snap into place. This shit rules.

—Keith Rosson

I had an out. It was June of 2007 and *Punk Planet* went under. After eight years of reviewing often shitty records, I could have freed myself of the burden of six deadlines a year. But the seemingly sudden news of *PP*'s demise affected me far more than I could have predicted. Had I reviewed so many emo records that I now was crying over a zine closing up shop? It turns out I deeply cared about record reviews. I already knew that I had an inexorable link to youth subculture and that I wasn't outgrowing the music I started worshipping in junior high. I already knew how much record reviews meant to people in bands when my own records were reviewed in *Flipside*, *PP*, and *MRR* "back in the day." But it took *PP* going under for me to realize just how relevant record reviewing was to me, how much a part of my musical education stemmed from evaluating new bands. Since its inception, I'd been getting into *Razorcake*. From its often comedic approach to its dead serious transformation into a non-profit business model, everything about the mag struck a nerve. To get to be a part of it has been a dream come true. I'm still discovering brilliant new bands, like Crap Corps and Rich White Males. I'm also still suffering through the occasional sonic turd and loving every minute of it. I'm proud and honored that *Razorcake* welcomed me and fully expect to be writing another whiny tribute fifty issues from now. In today's world of print publications dying daily, fifty issues is a giant fucking milestone. Congratulations!

—Art Ettinger

I've lived in four cities and traveled through so many others. *Razorcake* is the fence that keeps the flock in one place.

You know those horrible letters that relatives send out at the end of every year? "John got a promotion and used the money to take the family on a cruise. Here's a photo! The South Beach Diet works! ... I took Eddie to get his learner's permit on his fifteenth birthday. He passed the test with flying colors! ... Sarah is waiting tables at Chevy's in Manhattan. I told her not to get an art degree!"

The review sections of *Razorcake* are the enjoyable versions of those letters, catching me up on my friends. "Brainworms' LP rules. The Richmond scene is strong as ever! ... You're not the only one with a beard ... Sick of homework? Read the new *Eaves of Ass*!"

Then I flip to the columns and Ben Snakepit is drawing pictures of Richmond as I remember it from the late '90s. I get older, the world gets bigger, and the good stuff is boiled down and poured into this zine.

I'm new in Chicago, but my last couple of packages of review materials have contained records by Chicago bands. Its helped me feel centered. Similar things are happening

here as what was happening in Brooklyn, and in Richmond and in Boston. And, so far, the music's been good. That's a good thing because my home address is going to be published the next time the *'Cake* reviews my zine, and I don't want any angry visitors, unless it's a pizza guy who is having trouble carrying all of those delicious pies up the steps of my apartment building.

—CT Terry

Integrity is never outdated.

My involvement with *Razorcake* gave me the opportunity to do something I didn't think I could do before I started helping out at HQ.

Before I moved to L.A. for school, I hadn't had any experience in L.A. Nothing I heard about L.A. sounded attractive. It sounded like style with no substance, but the program at UCLA looked damn good. Within six hours of my arrival, I was thinking Bill Hicks was right: L.A. would be better off falling into the ocean and becoming known as Arizona Bay. The "desired" image in L.A. seemed to be based solely on what you consume. It's like an amalgamation of the worst of high school and mainstream culture. I ended up spending a lot of time indoors.

Spending time indoors means records and the internet. I was online looking at records on razorcake.org. They had some older Tiltwheel 7"s for sale in the distro, which I excitedly procured. I also saw a button to intern at *Razorcake*. I didn't click the button, but a seed was planted.

I received an email about a *Razorcake* benefit show in L.A. Dan Padilla, URTC, and God Equals Genocide were playing. I made it a point to go. It was the first time I enjoyed being in L.A. The seed began to grow.

Two months later, my school schedule cleared up, allowing me a free day. I offered it to *Razorcake*. My first day, Todd showed me around and reintroduced me to Daryl, whom I met briefly at the benefit show. We talked for a bit, and then I did some tasks. While performing the tasks, I thought about what cool, friendly, on-the-level dudes I just met—in L.A. Over the next few weeks, our friendship began to develop, and continues to do so to this day.

I still can't say that L.A. wouldn't be better off falling into the Pacific; I can say I hope some islands remain so that the friends I've made may survive if it does.

—Vincent Battilana

"I intern for a magazine in my spare time..." That's usually my excuse for not wanting to cover someone's shift at work. "Oh, that's good. What kind of magazine?" My reply is usually "a music magazine." But that's as far as I care to elaborate on the specifics of *Razorcake*, its ethics, and my personal motivation for contributing my spare time

to someone who more than likely will not understand the concept of donating hours of your day to a non-profit music magazine. I bet they think I work for *Rolling Stone*.

The more I use the word "intern," the more I try and distance myself from what the word means to some people. An internship, in the traditional sense, means you stand to gain some kind of a boost in your day-to-day living (financially, socially, etc.) by willingly sacrificing a paycheck in exchange for gaining experience in a field that you would like to make a career out of. The fact of the matter is that *Razorcake* will not do any of the following for me: 1.) Earn me any kind of "scene" or "punk" points. I mean, really, who gives a shit? 2.) Get me a six-figure salary. Money only corrupts, it seems. 3.) Get me laid. Punks have needs too, you know. So, to the average person, this venture is a waste of time. "No cash, no ass... I'll pass."

I decided to contact *Razorcake* after reading their solicitation for local help in the issue with the Tranzmitters on the cover.

—Juan Espinosa

I blame *Family Guy* for making *Razorcake* the part of my life it is today. When I'm in a rut I re-watch *Family Guy* DVDs. This one starts with Brian complaining on his psychiatrist's couch: "Nothing thrills me anymore." The animated psychiatrist says something to the effect of, "Maybe you're too inwardly focused. Try volunteering." I do not advocate taking life lessons from adult-themed cartoons, but I have heard worse advice. So, I contacted *Razorcake* to see if I could lend a hand. Now, I had never met the *Razorcake* folks; I simply liked the zine and was looking to volunteer. Before arriving for my first day, I was unaware that *Razorcake* HQ is a basement.

"This can go one of two ways..." I said to myself. Both ways start with the word "extremely." I'm happy to report it has been *extremely* good. I can also report confidently *Razorcake* is to punk what Harvard is to law. It has been a lot of hard work, insightful conversations, burritos, and great music.

To illustrate, Todd and I were in the office working; faces firmly planted on computer screens. Bored, I brought up a show from when I worked at a rock club back in Chicago. As the devil's advocate, I said Coldplay is okay, so long as they don't try to rock. Slow ballad-y stuff is where they live. Todd began to recount a conversation he had about Coldplay's music. Some folks said to Todd that they really love Coldplay, particularly their contribution to a certain film soundtrack. Todd had heard the film's soundtrack and remembered a good deal of the songs, but he could not recall one Coldplay song these folks spoke of so highly. "Listening to Coldplay is like looking at a rack of white shoelaces," Todd stated.

Not only was it plain and flavorless but *shoelaces*?! Even at their best, shoelaces are pretty inconsequential; an honest summation void of mean spirit. At the same time, I still get the blankness of Coldplay's musical canvas, which I feel is apt.

Good times.

—Jeremy Jones

TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Adrian Salas

Top 5 Songs That Are About Both Love and Heroin

5. SNFU, "If I Die, Will You Die?"
 4. Flipper, "Someday"
 3. The Gun Club, "She's Like Heroin to Me"
 2. The Joneses, "Pill Box"
 1. Circle Jerks, "Love Kills"
- (The version on the *Sid & Nancy* soundtrack not the one on *VI*.)

Amy Adoyzie

Things to Do When I Return to USA

1. Sleep (by myself)
2. Hang out with friends, booze, and loud music
3. Bask
4. Listen to the new Reigning Sound record
5. Sleep (with other folks)

Art Ettinger

Brandon Tussey, Outfitted for the Apocalypse CD

- Test Patterns, *Blackout LP*
- Todd Congelliere, *People in the Sand 7"*
- Vibrators, *Garage Punk LP*
- Green Day, *21st Century Breakdown 2 x LP*

Ben Snakepit

(I Apologize for Not Just Picking 5 Records This Issue.)

1. Kayla in Washington getting a tattoo of an entire Snakepit strip! Yeah!
2. MC Chris making full-color shirts of a drawing I did.
3. Ted Leo's solo tour that he just did.
4. Getting rad fan mail from far-off lands for my podcast (bensnakepit.podbean.com. Please check it out!).
5. I apologize to This Bike Is A Pipebomb for my criticism of their split 7" with Shellshag.

I didn't realize the point of the record was boy/girl two-piece bands. Sorry guys!

Billups Allen

Top 5 Bands/Artists I Might Lie About Liking Regardless of How Secure I Am About My Punkness

1. The Carpenters
2. The Gap Band
3. Elvis (Fat)
4. Tone-Loc
5. Mel Torme

Buttertooth

Top 5 7" in My Collection (This Month!)

1. Blotto, *Bang up Your Chair*: This Japanese band simply kills it! Played Ogija, Sendai, Tokyo, Yokohama, and more with these guys!
2. Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission/Bottledirt split 7": Both bands rip! Come back Rescue Mission!
3. New Bomb Turks, *So Young. So Fair. So Debonair*: These guys from the Midwest died too early!
4. Grade, "Chancere," "Not Heroic," "Abandon the Need": Three solid, sludgy melodic songs from a great band that's now defunct, as far as I know.
5. Elvez / Mars Accelerator, split 7": Quirky, dissonant indie post-punk from both these Seattle bands.

Chris Pepus

- The UnMutuals, reunited and doing shows again
- Angelic Upstarts concert clips on the net
- www.joebageant.com
- *Contempt (Le mépris)* DVD
- Shark Pants, *Porno Snakehead CD*

Craig Horky

1. The Detroit Redwings (Screw you, Penguins)
2. Tin Armor, *A Better Place Than I Have Been*
3. Wastelander, *Wardrive*
4. Party Of Helicopters, *Please Believe It*

5. Murder City Devils, *Empty Bottles, Broken Hearts*

Craven Rock

1. Daniel Higgs live at a dive bar in Louisville, KY
2. *Wendy and Lucy* (movie)
3. *Starfucker #3* (zine)
4. Wu-Tang Clan, *Wu: The Story of the Wu-Tang Clan CD*
5. Mountain Goats, *Bitter Melon Farm CD*

C.T. Terry

1. Goodie Mob, *Angelic Wars* rarities mixtape
2. Black Lips, *Good Bad Not Evil*
3. Richard "Groove" Holmes—all
4. *Gorilla, My Love*, by Toni Cade Bambara (book)
5. Writing a full draft of the novel I started in class this Spring. There. I said it. Now I have to do it.

Daryl Gussin

- Crom's side of their split 7" with Agorophobic Nosebleed. (Thanks, Juan)
- Screaming Females, *Power Move CD*
- Daylight Robbery, *Red Tape 7"*
- Sleepwall 7" (Thanks, Mike)
- Moving into a place in between two Mexican restaurants.

Dave Disorder

1. *East Bound and Down* (HBO)
2. Marked Men, *Ghosts LP*
3. *1000 Ways to Die* (Spike TV)
4. Thermals, *Now We Can See CD*
5. *Fanboys* (Solid movie my bud got off the interweb.)

Dave Williams

- Top 5 Highlights from This Year's Gaga Weekend in Ottawa*
- Mad quality time with the extended Statues family.
 - Sedatives playing to a packed room on opening night.
 - The 10 AM Caesar brunch with The Fucking Machines.
 - The entire daytime show at Yogi's. Best day ever.
 - Ian's face at the end of Saturday night. Childlike elation. Perfect.
 - An absolutely amazing weekend in the best city on Earth.

Denise DePaolo

1. *Weeds*, Season 4 DVD
2. Setback, *Reign of Error CD*
3. Harriet Tweed, *100% Tweed CD*
4. NOFX, *Coaster CD*
5. *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*, by David Sedaris (book)

Designated Dale

- Razorcake 50th Issue Rock'n'roll Blowout Benefit. Fantastic bands that killed it and great friends all around (including our own Toby Tober reappearing as Batgirl). What more do you really need?
- The recent marriage of Jeff & Meagan Fox: congratulations and thanks again for having us there on your special day, neighbors.
- Riverboat Gamblers at Spaceland in Los Angeles. Bringing the rock back to L.A. only the way these homeboys can deliver it. And hearing the new tunes live was the icing on the cake (even though Hipster McShitbird on the soundboard was asleep at the wheel).
- The Gorgons! No-frills garage fucker-uppers from France
- *The Pantry* in downtown L.A., on the corner of 9th & Figueroa, currently owned by ex-Los Angeles mayor and two-time DUI award winner Richard Riordan. Been going to this 24-hours-a-day gorge fest for quite a long time now, and figured I should recommend it to all our readers (local and visiting) who haven't eaten there yet. Four words: Sausage and cheese omelet.

Ever a.k.a "Girl About Town"

1. Razorcake Benefit Show @ Nomad Collective Art Compound
2. The Meatmen, It's Casual @ the Relax Bar
3. Eyehategod @ Murder Fest Knitting Factory/Swing Kids and Unbroken @ the Glass House
4. Propagandhi @ the Echoplex / Ringers @ the Glass House Lobby
5. The Gears @ the American Legion Highland Park / the Stains @ the Redwood Bar/ Murder Junkies @ the Redwood Bar

Gabe Rock

Top 5 Chaos in Tejas

1. Six days in a car with four girls. Didn't fart once. Didn't even have to try?
2. Sneaking into Cocksparrer and dancing arm in arm with

When you do stupid well,
it equals brilliance.

skinheads. Only one fight. Not me.
 3. Randa Aidsbriggs, drug hookups, and forwarning that Ben Snakepit is a domesticated bitch now.
 4. Barton Springs. Bridge jumping, lying to cops—and punks in a sense—bathing in Lone Star together.
 5. Lived in Portland two years first. Saw Warcry in Tejas. Favorite band now. “Bullshit, Bullshit, Fucking Bullshit!”

Jake Shut

1. The Transgressions, *Waste My Time* CD EP
2. New hip hop from Guru, Del and Aceyalone
3. The Paper Chase, *Someday All of This Could Be Yours*
4. Billy Raygun, *Seasick 7"*
5. First two Stiff Little Fingers albums

Jeff Proctor

- Top Five* The New Scooby-Doo Movies *Guest Stars*
1. Phyllis Diller
 2. Don Knotts
 3. Harlem Globetrotters
 4. The Three Stooges
 5. Batman and Robin

Jennifer Federico

- Top 5 Cool Things About a Quick Trip to Paris*
1. Baguettes. Baguettes and cheese. Baguettes and cheese and wine.
 2. The Catacombs!
 3. *Centre Pompidou*
 4. Tex Napalm at *La Mécanique Ondulatoire*
 5. *Le boyfriend très super*

Jeremy Jones

- Top 5 Political Jive*
1. Healthcare reform
 2. Sonia Sotomayor
 3. Michelle Obama's 1st Music Series Installment
 4. Kenneth Feinberg
 5. Al Franken

Jimmy Alvarado

- Five Bands I Respect Thanks to Todd*
- Smogtown
 - Leatherface
 - Fugazi (this one still grudgingly so)
 - Me First and the Gimme Gimmes
 - Tiltwheel (took the Razorcake 50th ish gig to seal the deal)

Joe Dana

- My First Top 5 (Way better than My First Sony)*
1. Bartending at the Razorcake 50th issue party spectacular (what

I remember was rad)
 2. The Sass Dragons: when you do stupid well, it equals brilliance.
 3. Brickfight at Juanita's
 4. www.questionablecontent.net. I am addicted to this comic like your Grandma is with *All My Children*.
 5. Summer is here: porch beers and barbecue time!

Joe Evans III

- The Gateway District, *Some Days You Get the Thunder* CD
- Bible Children, live at someone's apartment
- Windy City Sound Clash Fest
- Every band from Minneapolis right now.
- Taco John's

Keith Rosson

- *Sentimental, Heartbroken Rednecks*, by Greg Bottoms (stories)
- Austin Lucas, *Somebody Loves You* CD
- Fighting Dogs LP
- Death Is Not Glamorous, *Soft Clicks* LP
- Tranzmitors, *Busy Singles* LP

Kurt Morris

1. Das Racist single, "Combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell (Wallpaper Remix)"
2. Isis, *Wavering Radiant*
3. Patrol, *Zirconium*
4. My renewed interest in photography
5. Isis, Pelican, and Tombs at the Paradise in Boston on 6/5

Matt Average

1. Sixteens, live at the Cash Bar and *The Glacier* demo
2. Magick Daggers, live at the Cash Bar, and all recorded material.
3. Billygoat, live at Pehrspace
4. Assemble Head In Sunburst Sound, *When Sweet Sleep Returned* CD
5. Makabert Fynd / Nice Idiot, split EP

Mike Frame

1. *Nigeria 70 Compilation*, CD
2. New York Dolls, *Cause I Sez So* CD
3. Sly & The Family Stone, entire catalog
4. Booker T, *Potato Hole* CD
5. The Queens, entire catalog

MP Johnson

- GG Allin and the Carolina Shitkickers, reissue 7"
- Faggot, self-titled CD
- Rancid, *Let the Dominoes Fall* acoustic CD

- *Drag Me to Hell* (movie)
- *The Muppet Show* (comic book)

Mr. Z

Fun Things I'm Proud of Being Involved with in 2009

1. Being the only one allowed to take photos on stage at GZA at Detroit Bar, Costa Mesa, CA
2. NOFX, Smoke Or Fire, and Holding On To Sound at Hard Rock Hotel, Las Vegas
3. Indiepit Launch Party at Juanita's with Holding On To Sound, Underground Railroad To Candyland, Vlad And The Impalers
4. Seeing Peelander-Z for the umpteenth time! Goodbye Blue, hello Green!
5. bigkidcookingshow.podbean.com

Nardwuar The Human Serviette

1. The Famines *14 July 2008* Cassette (comes with a 268 page bound book!)
2. The Tranzmitors, *Busy Singles* CD
3. *Ugly Things Magazine* # 28
4. Isotopes, *Heatseeker 7"* EP (Baseball punk from Vancouver)
5. Wilfred N & The Grown Men, *Stop Go Romeo* CD

Nick Toerner

- Brickfight / Shang-A-Lang, split 7"
- Pretty Boy Thorson & the Falling Angels, *Ain't It Funny...* LP
- The Gateway District, *Some Days You Get the Thunder* LP
- Wormburner, self-titled 7"
- Brokedowns / Sass Dragons, split 7"

Nighthawk

- Top 5 Things I Did While on Unemployment the Last Eight Months*
1. Go on tour with Sex Robots
 2. Let Missouri pay for my beer
 3. Get food stamps
 4. Watch a lot of *Law & Order*
 5. Start growing pot

Rene Navarro

1. Otis Redding, *Very Best of*
2. Andrew Jackson Jihad/ Ghost Mice, split CD
3. Warcry, *Maniacs on Pedestals*
4. *Black Water* fanzine Issue #1
5. Teenage Kicks, *Cuatro Pasos Al Viento 7"*

Rev. Nørb

- Rantouls, *Little Green Hat 7"*
- Barreracudas, *New York Honeys 7"*
- Davie Allan & The Arrows, *The Devil's Rumble: The Tower/Sidewalk Recordings '64-'68 2xLP*
- Marked Men, *Ghosts* LP
- Bobby Ubangi, *Girl Like You 7"*

Rhythm Chicken

- The entire Toys That Kill discography
- Hamms, readily available in WI, not in Vegas.
- Chopping my left middle finger's tip off... no, wait, that sucks.
- Bob Log III, live... anywhere. His shit is perfect.
- Underground Railroad To Candyland, *Bird Roughts* CD

Ryan Horky

1. Flipper, *Generic Flipper* LP
2. Death, *For the Whole World To See* LP
3. Heaven and Hell, *The Devil You Know* LP
4. Firehose, *If'n* LP
5. Coalesce, *Ox* LP

Sean Koepenick

- Top 5 New Releases That I Am Looking Forward to This Summer*
1. The Bomb
 2. The Riptides
 3. Trashcan Sinatras
 4. The AV Club
 5. The Dopamines

Steve Larder

- Stuff I've Been Rocking to This Month*
1. N.N., self-titled 7"
 2. Crowd Control / Mob Rules, 7"
 3. Gruel, self-titled 12"
 4. Banner Pilot, *Pass the Poison* 12"
 5. Leatherface, *Mush* 12"

Todd Taylor

- Kalashnikov, *Angosica-rock 7"*
- Young Governor, "Virginia Creeper" b/w "I'm a Mess" 7"
- Glean Garden / The Tim Version split 7"
- Crimson Ghosts, *Earth EP*, CDEP
- Giant Haystacks / Young Offenders, split 12"
- Cinevegas, especially *It Came from Kuchar* (movie) (Thanks, Mike)

Ty Stranglehold

- Top Five "I" Bands*
1. I-Spy
 2. Iron Maiden
 3. Inner Anger
 4. Iggy & The Stooges
 5. Infamous Scientists

Willie Fucking Everywhere

- Black Rainbow, 7"s and live
- Fun (live at Buchon)
- Graves House (live at Buchon)
- Eviction party at Buchon house, San Luis Obispo.
- Razorcake Benefit, June 6th, 2009

29TH STREET DISCIPLES: Self-titled: CD

Street punky, but not in some sort of lame re-hashed fashion that's so easy to replicate but so hard to pull off with satisfaction. This record was quite enjoyable for me. It's tough and aggressive but musical, as if around 1966 John Lennon hadn't forgot what a hard-nosed punk he had been only a few years earlier. Yes, this is one of those "make me want to bellow" records but the difference is that there's a musical edge to the 29th Street Disciples that isn't often found in rock'n'roll of this genre. While they're riding that razor's edge between clichéd and classic sound, in the process they inject some unexpected hooks and melodies that create a fresh version of a sound long familiar. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Zodiac Killer)

97-SHIKI: Self-titled: Cassette

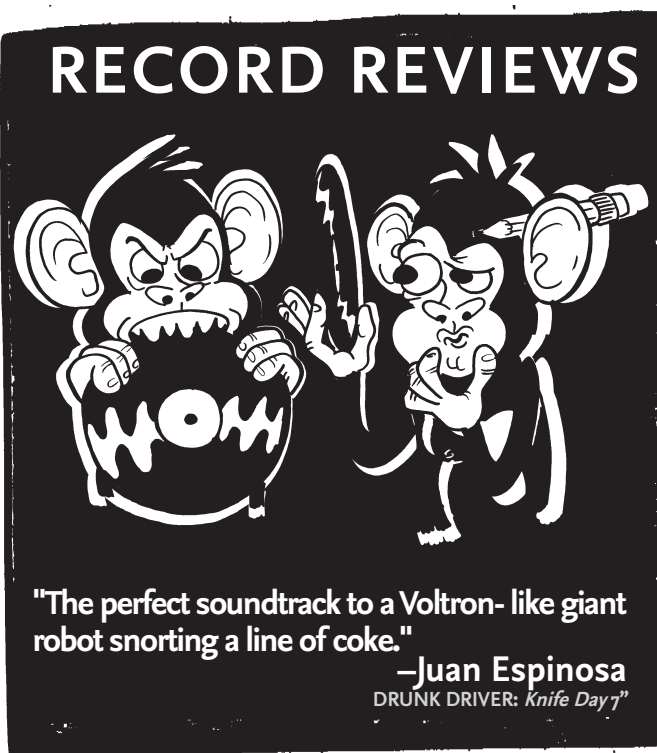
Quirky. That's the only word I could come up with in describing this band's sound. But I hope you're not thinking about bands like System Of A Down or Primus. No, this is the good kind of quirky. The musicianship is keen. Very tight. But nothing too flashy either. Imagine if Botch or Daughters laid off the heaviness and instead took up a strict diet of Jesus Lizard. Pro quality cassette and packaging, to boot. Great stuff. —Juan Espinosa (Revulsion, revulsionrecords.blogspot.com)

97-SHIKI: Self-titled: 7" EP

Five songs of frantic, choppy art punk from Chicago. The spazzing is held together by an almost funky bass, and right when things feel like they're about to fly off the handle, they throw in a shout-along or a clutch guitar part to ground you again. Considering that this band proves over and over how they can stop on a dime, the resulting songs are catchier than they have any right to be. I've seen this band live a couple of times, and they are even tighter and more powerful in person. If you're into any of the following bands, there's something on this little puddle of plastic that you will enjoy: The Ex, The Minutemen, Fugazi, Ornette Coleman, Gang Of Four. —CT Terry (hewhocorruptsinc.com, staticstation.com)

AGAINST EMPIRE / AUKTION: Split: 7"

Against Empire: More of a live feel and a bit cleaner sound from what I have heard in the past from these SoCal punks. The included songs are more in the d-beat vein and I like that they are a bit faster and have more of a rocking feel to them than we have heard in the past. Previously, they incorporated crust and black metal elements. This has a more direct, slap-in-the-face appeal for me. Knowing them, I'm proud that



"The perfect soundtrack to a Voltron- like giant robot snorting a line of coke."

—Juan Espinosa
DRUNK DRIVER: *Knife Day 7*

they keep progressing and growing with each release. Auction: From Sweden. Unfortunately broke up recently. I had heard they were going to come to the states to tour. I was hoping the singer would have finally gotten me my shirt he had promised to buy for me a few years ago and never came through. Two tight d-beat numbers of their own that blast through in maximum efficiency. They too add a rock feel to their sound, not swaying to metal. —Donofthead (Threat To Existence)

ANDREW JACKSON JIHAD / COBRA SKULLS: Split: 7"

The Mitch Clem artwork on this is great; front and back equally rad. I'm glad that instead of lyrics they had each band explain why they chose to cover the song. The first time I heard this record, I thought Andrew Jackson Jihad had actually written "Two Headed Boy," since I'd heard them play it live. It definitely feels theirs. They have made me commit to buying that Neutral Milk Hotel album, and to filing it with my Andrew Jackson Jihad stuff, for personal reasons now public. The Cobra Skulls, whom I'm new to, cover "Subterranean Homesick Blues" by Bob Dylan. It sounds the way I assume any rock outfit would sound if they covered that song and didn't really change anything but the musicians. —Rene Navarro (Suburban Home)

ASSEMBLE HEAD IN SUNBURST SOUND:

When Sweet Sleep Returned: CD

This sounds like some lost gem from the late-'60s/ early-'70s era of rock with the psychedelic elements and a countrified undercurrent. The production values are perfect for this style, not clean and overdone. Just right. These guys have paid close attention to the era and pulled it off in modern times. The music has a blessed-out quality, and the length calls for introspection as the guitars go off in some cosmic soloing with space rock sound effects pushing it forward. "Two Birds" is the standout track. They take off into a jam that just keeps moving and never tires. For the most part, this entire album is a laid back affair. However, they pick up the pace a little bit with "Clive and the Lyre," that has a swinging riff that comes in and out, while never losing the driving tempo as they switch over to the final track, "End Under Down," where the guitar comes in with an almost bomber-like sound, then washes into a psyched-out haze. If you want to know what summers are like in California, I can't think of a better album than this to capture that feel. —M.Avrq (Tee Pee, teepeerecords.com)

AURYN / BOSQUE: Split: 7"

Aurnyn: Dark, apocalyptic crust that is nowhere near happy or painting a

pretty picture. At times, the music is brooding and desolate. At other times, it's charging forth with utter rage at blast beat speed. Bosque: A perfect pairing with Aurnyn, being similar in mood but use more of a d-beat backing when playing fast and incorporating a doom style sound on their slow parts. A good introduction piece to two bands I personally never heard before. Hats off for the packaging, beautifully silkscreened on a chipboard cover. —Donofthead (Square of Opposition)

BEARSUIT: OH:IO: CD

Crazy, energetic, hectic, and shouty indie pop with "wacky" synth and "unexpected" brass. I bet you five cents they wear "crazy" costumes onstage. I'm not saying it's bad—it just seems a little par for the course at this point. If you like music that sounds like it's actively trying to implode, then this may be your ironic thrift store mug of tea. —Sarah Shay (Happy Happy Birthday To Me)

BEE HAT CH: Brood: CD

This is well-produced noise music. It borders on trance and dance at times. It's one of those CDs that can be listened to in one foul succession without one ever being able to recognize a transition from one song to the next. I was disappointed when I realized Bee Hat Ch's first song, "Edison Medicine," was not a Tesla cover song. My father would have been happy to get a copy. —N.L. Dewart (Lens)

BEHIND THE WAGON:

The Bottle, God...and the Ones Who Really Love You in the End: CD

Okay first off, the album name is way too long to not have a punch line. Secondly, the second song on the album, titled...I don't f'in know, (I can't read it! I'll get to that in a second) is too cheesy for my tastes. One of the lines is, "I'm one in a million, I'm the last of a breed." Well sir, I have to tell you, you're not one in a million. I know because I already listen to Lucero. Thirdly, the album artwork sucks. It's totally stupid that they went to all the effort to get photos taken of them being all serious and artistic in some location that has nothing to do with music, but they then put black type on a dark grey and black background. Now, this isn't rocket science folks. If you do put black on black, I won't be able to read what you're printing. Are you pickin' up what I'm layin' down? Also, track five is way too long. That shit needs to be cut down because it's long and it wouldn't be boring if it wasn't five minutes and twenty-five fucking seconds long. Okay, now that I told you what's wrong with this album, I'll tell you what's right. If

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you like that country juke box kinda joint with rock songs that are a little country and a little bit southern soul, then you might be into this album. These dudes put on a fun show and know how to party, so go check 'em out. —Dan Glen Fury (Gettin' Rad)

BELUGA: "Pet" b/w "Cowboy Boots": 7"

The drums at the beginning of the song about wanting to be a grandmother sounded kind of like the beginning to "My Sharona" by the Knack, but after that it pretty much just sounded like what i imagine Bikini Kill rehearsal tapes sounded like before they wrote "Rebel Girl." Sounds kind of like they'd be the first band on a four-band bill where none of the bands truly suck, but fan defection never exactly comes up as an item of concern for bands two thru four. **BEST SONG:** "Cowboy Boots" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Pet" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Recorded live in one take in their practice space. Huh, woulda thought? —Rev. Nørb (Beluga)

BILLY JOE WINGHEAD: Dark Ride: CD

The more or less straight-ahead cover of "Science Fiction Double Feature" at the end stands out like a sore thumb after the thirteen tracks of drugged-out, amped-up, Theremin-wielding, bluesy psychosis that preceded it. This is a fairly minor criticism, though, 'cause, truth be told, they had me on their side at the first tune, with its chorus of "Your friend Jesus ain't no motherfuckin' friend

of mine....take your little book and hit the motherfuckin' highway." And yes, dear friends, the Theremin was definitely abused during the course of this recording. —Jimmy Alvarado (Zodiac Killer)

BILLY JOE WINGHEAD: Dark Ride: CD

If Chuck Berry suffered severe brain damage ((i mean, more so than usual)) and decided to become Nine Pound Hammer, then decided ((via split-personality band vote)) to channel the spirit of GG Allin in sort of a Darin Rafaelli role, then wiped his ass with a Bible ((and, since he's Chuck Berry, videotaped that part of it)), the result may, in fact, yield similar results to that of Billy Joe Winghead. I know not what flags Winghead Nation swears fealty to, but the album's leadoff track, "Your Friend Jesus," is such an exhilarating, blasphemous stomp that i am virtually certain all other flags, galaxy-wide, are now little but smoldering ash and flaming urine stains. Later in the album, the band finds God and cuts a straight-up Four Seasons cover. One way or the other, Jesus wept. **BEST SONG:** "Your Friend Jesus" **BEST SONG TITLE:** I'd hate to say "Shitpipe Minnie," but they're just that kinda band. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** If you buy four McDonald's® Filet-O-Fish™ sandwiches during lent, it comes up to \$6.66. —Rev. Nørb (Zodiac Killer)

BLACK HOUSES: Fury: CD

Okay, full disclosure time: I have been listening to the members of Black

Houses in various bands for almost ten years. I'm friends with them, and I actually work with two of the members. Quite frankly, sometimes it's kind of weird. I hang out with these guys, work with them, ride the bus with them... and then I go to one of their shows, and the dynamic totally changes. I am a fan through and through, rocking the fuck out and thinking this band could not get any more awesome. I know some of you know what I'm talking about. The same goes for when I listen to their recordings, particularly their most recent album, *Fury*. Through different band names and line-up changes, there's always been something intangible at the core that has never changed. Perhaps it's the songwriting, primarily by guitarist/vocalist Christiaan Morris. After leaving the vocals to former bandmate Christen Shaw in their last band, Morris is back at the mic, singing his cutting lyrics in a trademark melodic shout. Big themes are loneliness, desensitization, dependency, and societal failures, but with nary a trace of whine. With the new band comes new writing and a new sound; more focused and more technical, the songs now feature intricate guitar solos and heavy riffs that give the band a darkly metallic sound, expanding on their garage punk background and giving it greater depth while making it a bit more accessible, to boot. The musicianship has been upped a notch all around. What hasn't changed is the intensity, energy, and severe honesty of their songs. I know I'm biased, but I think this is their best and most complex release to date. If you don't at least give

it a try, you're cheating yourself. —Sarah Shay (Self-released, myspace.com/blackhousesmusic)

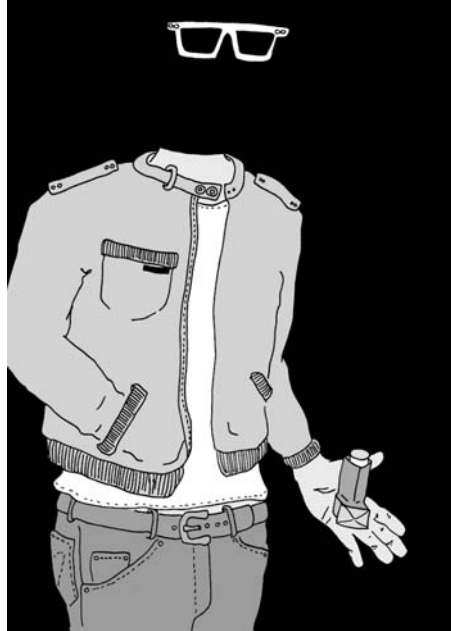
BLACK TUSK / HOLY MOUNTAIN, THE: Split: EP

Two songs from The Holy Mountain that were recorded in 2007 that eventually found their way onto vinyl two years later. Apparently, these are also their swan songs as they've since broken up. As someone who likes Japanese hardcore, I appreciate the Burning Spirits-style guitar noodling on the first song. These aren't The Holy Mountain's best songs (the *Entrails* album is amazing) but they aren't throwaways either. Black Tusk keep things interesting with more of a metal approach on their side. I detect a hint of *Hell Awaits*-era Slayer. Kylesa immediately come to mind as a comparison but I don't want to dismiss Black Tusk as a clone or knock off. They only have one song on here but it was enough to keep me interested in any future releases they might have. —Juan Espinosa (No Idea)

BLANK DOGS: Under and Under: 12"

Blank Dogs is the moniker for a Brooklyn bedroom rocker who, for the last few years, has been compulsively releasing records through a slew of Brooklyn indie labels. *Under and Under* is Blank Dogs most ambitious effort yet. The CD has fifteen tracks; the double album has twenty and the extra songs are slower and more somber sounding. Both releases feature heavy

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synth, massive amounts of feedback and distortion, and vocals that come at you as if from a diving bell on the ocean floor. It's the rudiments of post-punk, Britpop, and new wave fused together by an artist with a keen sense of style. This record doesn't just flat out rock, at times it's achingly beautiful. The brains behind Blank Dogs has said he wanted to make music he would have liked when he was fifteen. That's the age when your heart gets ripped out on the regular. If you're not careful, *Under and Under* will do the same. —Jim Ruland (In The Red)

BOMBS, THE: *Black Butterfly*: CD

While I fully believe that the idea of rock'n'roll should never be confined to simply one form (How fucking dull would that be?), I subscribe to the notion that scuzzy, distortion-heavy garage is the most unfiltered form you can find under its umbrella. L.A. two-piece The Bombs attempt to rile things up with this primitive and grimy throwback but the attempt feels more defanged than nervy. Bearing some resemblances to another garage punk band with a similar moniker (the winning guess would be The Dirtbombs), the energetic duo should take creative cues from the Detroit troupe's coursing vocals, contorted verve, and confrontational volume levels. Keep this effort's off-kilter lyrics (which include a chorus leading in with "I'm not from Nova Scotia"), consider ditching the Ramones-esque repetitive titles (both "Shake Me" and

"The Shakes" are here), and let the rock fester and mutate before picking it back up. —Reyan Ali (Self-released, myspace.com/thebombsmusic)

BONECRUSHER:

Our Nations Burning: 10"

Bonecrusher is one of those bands that keeps plugging away year after year, defying whatever is trendy at the time. All four of these mid-tempo, anthemic, passionate, oi/streetpunk tracks are extraordinarily catchy and potent. I typically prefer Bonecrusher's earlier material to most of what followed, but this terrific release is a true return to form. The vivacious shout-outs and sing-a-longs, led by uncommonly melancholy vocals set Bonecrusher apart from the booted masses. The first pressing is on gorgeous swirled silver and black marbled vinyl, so now is the time to check this killer record out. The fans shall not be crushed. —Art Ettinger (Longshot)

BOTOX PARTY / ZHENIA GOLOV: *Split*: 7"

Let's not beat around the bush... I love this 7". It encapsulates the spirit releasing music this way should include. First, it has meaningful music. Zhenia Golov slams out some furious social political hardcore about TV and advertisements; the influences of the likes of Black Flag and Propagandhi are apparent. Second, these two bands are different: Botox Party takes up the rough and tumble pop punk band on the split by offering three of the five tracks found here. Botox Party puts out guitar-heavy pop tunes backed up by

a precise rhythm section. Lastly, this release has some individual quirkiness. The cover art for this vinyl is a *Spy vs. Spy* comic with Shania Golov vying against Botox Party. Did I mention I love this 7". —N.L. Dewart (myspace.com/xrailoadedrecordsx, myspace.com/botoxpartyva)

BOUNCING SOULS:

20th Anniversary Series: Vol. 1: 7"

It's been awhile since I have heard anything new from the Bouncing Souls. I think the last thing I heard was *The Gold Record*. Was that the last thing they released? I know that one wasn't a favorite of mine. Haven't listened to it since I got it. Don't know what turned me off, but whatever I didn't like before was rectified here. The formula is the same but what is tried and true is what works. The singalong choruses, the hook-laden melodic music, great production, and general feel of fun in their songs all seem to have returned. It's good to hear after twenty years that they can keep cranking them out instead of being a horrible caricature of themselves. —Donofthedeat (Chunksaah)

BRAINWORMS II: *Swear to Me*: LP

I'm having a hard time reading this band. One moment, they're completely off-kilter and dangerously close to cacophony. The next, they're bright and almost jazzy. Then they quote Dag Nasty and somehow sound like a band that would do that sort of thing. This is music that requires the listener to invest some mind power. The band's

name is completely appropriate. —MP Johnson (Rorschach)

BRIMSTONE HOWL:

We Came in Peace: CD

Brimstone Howl's *We Came in Peace* is a solid record. It's also an interesting album because its influences are those late '70s/early '80s blues-punk and sleaze rock bands that are often overlooked; groups like Australia's the Saints and the Scientists and California's The Joneses. There's also a Paisley Underground feel in some of Brimstone Howl's guitar playing (check "Shangri-La," a standout track on the album). Brimstone Howl made a smart choice in working with Jim Diamond—a producer known for banging out records in two days and getting great results (see the Compulsive Gamblers' sublime *Crystal Gazing/Luck Amazing* and Miss Alex White's eponymous debut). Pretty top-notch stuff—fans of the aforementioned bands and the Born Bad comps will likely be into *We Came in Peace*. —Ryan Leach (Alive Natural Sound, alivenenergy.com)

BURNING IMAGE: *Fantasma*: CD

Off of Jello Biafra's label, Burning Image has awoken from a twenty-plus year slumber. *Fantasma* is a puree of early Christian Death, 45 Grave, and Frankenstein's blues stagger. "The Chosen Ones" and "I've Been Waiting" are my favorite tracks because they showcase Moe's vocals and their spindly goth guitar structures. According to Moe, *Fantasma* is just the beginning. Recommended to Batcave

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followers and nu gravers. —Kristen K. (Alternative Tentacles)

CANADIAN RIFLE: *Visibility Zero: LP*

Hang in with this one. Friends and I just finished silk screening 150 posters and we're in the process of hand-stamping two thousand record labels. In the middle of those processes, you, as the stamper or ink-puller, can see the little imperfections, especially when directly compared to a particularly nice screen print or stamp impression. But the person who's going to get a copy of what we're making only sees one, maybe two copies of what was made by hand. The maker sees the entire landscape and can have a better eye for separating the runts from the studs. The receiver gets a snapshot, a freeze frame of a larger motion. On to band fandom. I do believe I own every piece of vinyl that Canadian Rifle's released. The very first 7" had two guitars: one sad, one happy. Since Canadian Rifle are from Chicago, the instant comparison for me would be Ben Weasel's perma-whine counterbalanced with Jughead's ray-of-sunshine guitar work. And that's what I thought was particularly nice about Canadian Rifle's first 7". "You dipped your happy into my sad! Take your smile out of my frown! I know, let's celebrate melancholia and ennui! (The sound of a missed high five. Charlie Brown zig-zag mouth.)" But, let's suppose this was Canadian Rifle's first piece of released music and it changes a bit. From the topicality of the lyrics (microbes in sponges, swallowing landfill, sickness),

the gruffness of the voice, and, well, the *handwriting*, Off With Their Heads comparisons wouldn't be too far off the mark, except that OWTB have equal numbers of claymores pointed at themselves and the audience and Canadian Rifle seem content with the existential fact that we're all fucked regardless. And so I took the LP around the track several more times. Oh, you sneaky Petes. On several songs (if not all; I'm not a sound engineer), there are multiple guitar tracks—lead and rhythm—and sometimes, they weave, bob, and buzz around like bees in flight. Really nice; it works great in "Live Infected." As talented as guitarist Jake Levee is, I don't think he has four arms, and Canadian Rifle is a three piece so, in the studio, two guitars it is. Makes me wonder how it'd come across live... Synopsis: Knowing their legacy, this LP is not as instantly blinding as the interrogation light of the first 7", but it has plenty of warmth, heat, and charms of its own. —Todd (Residue/Squirrel Heart)

CAPITAL: *Blind Faith: 7"*

More times than not when I read a review that describes something as "melodic hardcore" it doesn't end up sounding what I expected. The first thing I think is Kid Dynamite. Jason had melody. And it definitely was hardcore. Capital follow suit. Hardcore without a doubt, and melody with enough of a presence to not sound too whiny. Two originals and a Dag Nasty cover. —Daryl (Iron Pier / Just A Audial)

CHARLIE & THE MOONHEARTS / TEEN ANGER: *split 12"*

Charlie & the Moonhearts make no bones about playing '60s-inspired rock'n'roll from the same local scene that has produced acts such as Ty Segal/Tradional Fools, Audacity, Thee Makeout Party, and many, many more. Lots of soul, lots of rhythm. It's garagey, it's surfy, and it's time-tested rock'n'roll that's produced for pool parties and other assorted good times. Teen Anger hail from Toronto and the music is much more frigid. While still heavy on the '60s influence, they twist the sound into a damaged, curdled knot. Not as abrasive as some, less approachable than most. Still good, reverbed-to-hell rock. —Daryl (Telephone Explosion)

CHINESE:

The Conquest of Tomorrow Today: CD

The tricky thing about instrumentals is you're working at a deficit when you subtract an integral part to—for lack of a better term—the pop song template, in this case vocals/lyrics. By doing so, you have to find some way to compensate by making sure some other part is picking up the slack. The most obvious way is to write a song that is so compelling, so outstanding, so goddamned good that the audience won't notice the missing pieces. This is no small feat when you're talking about a single, but if you're gonna try and tackle a full-length, you better have Charlie friggin' Parker in your band. Sadly, these guys have no Parker equivalent, nor, it appears, anything to compensate for the aforementioned

deficits. What they do have is a collection of tunes that sound like up-tempo quasi-stoner/space rock anthems that never quite get off the ground. —Jimmy Alvarado (Whoa! Boat)

CLOCK HANDS STRANGLE: *Distaccati: CD*

I really liked this album because it's bouncy with gloom, Walt Whitman references, and random trumpets. Think Dramarama, early Modest Mouse, and Delta Spirit, which is a great band from San Diego. The lyrics are really good little stories with a very well-recorded soundtrack. This album is easy and fun to get lost in, creating an audible space in which to hide from your recurrent reality. —Rene Navarro (Chocolate Lab)

COCKSPARRER:

Guilty as Charged 2009: CD

COCKSPARRER: *Two Monkeys 2009: CD*

I wanna call these reissues of two Cocksparrer albums originally released back in the mid-'90s, but according to the press sheet, they're both "remastered and rerecorded," which makes explaining them a bit more problematic and no doubt why they have the "2009" addendum in their titles. Not owning either's previous incarnation, I do have a number of the tunes on the *Bloody Minded* best-of disc that came out about the same time and they do sound a bit better mixed here. I guess it doesn't really matter what they are so long as they are good, and they are that. Across both one will find numerous now-hits—"A.U.," "Because You're Young,"

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"Tough Guys," "I Feel a Death Coming On," and more—plus the usual odds and sods the Captain tacks on to make the discs that much more crucial. Good stuff all around from one of the finest and most consistent punk bands ever, however the discs are ultimately classified. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

COUNTERCLOCK WISE, THE:

Wind 'Em Up to Shut 'Em Down: LP

With co-ed harmonies and lightning speed licks of the banjo, Counterclock Wise delivers a consistent record of folk punk and blues. The male vocals remind me of the Pine Hill Haints and transport me to a porch in the backwoods, while "Jo Jo Song" takes it down a notch with softer female lead vocals. The result of their harmonizing sounds like X but with a banjo. The chorus of "A Ghost of Future's Past" is a great example of that. The female vocals become eerie ghost calls invoking a spooky element like a rural graveyard at midnight. Some of the best stuff I've heard this year. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Arkam, myspace.com/arkamrecords)

CRIMSON GHOSTS: Earth EP: CDEP

Boston's Crimson Ghosts' shtick is all-instrumental surf covers of Misfits songs. In less capable hands, it'd merely be amusing, yet crumble on repeated listens. But in wizened punk rockers' hands who can play their instruments incredibly, it's addictive and oddly soothing. I think there's a great opportunity for subversion with the Crimson Ghosts.

Say the band played a state fair or an art in the park show with kids in strollers in attendance. They could totally get away with "Skulls." I mean, they're not the ones screaming "Collect the heads of little girls and put 'em on my wall!" it'd be the Misfits fans in the audience. And the suburban parents would tap along in reverb-drenched delight none the wiser. Thankfully, I recently got to see these dudes play live and it further cemented my appreciation of them. Two things: 1.) Everyone in the band was singing, loudly, along to the songs, but none of them were mic'd, so it gave everyone in attendance the opportunity to channel their own inner Danzig. And I'll take a room of one hundred Danzig lovers over the Danzig Danzig any day. 2.) With the absence of a microphone and both the band and the audience getting their "Whoa Oh!"s on, there were several almost-full-mouth, carp-like kisses. Let's hear it for breaking down the barriers! Highly recommended. —Todd (Self-released, Necro-Tone, myspace.com/crimsonghosts)

CROSS STICED EYES: Coranach: CD

Think Rudimentary Peni on a heavy Killing Joke bender and you're on the right track with this one. Normally, a band attempting such an endeavor would be begging to have their ears slapped back 'cause, let's be honest here, those are some King Kong-sized Underoos to attempt to fill, but they more than manage to hold their own. Maybe it's 'cause the lineup includes some folks who were actual

contemporaries of those bands (current drummer is the Subhumans' Trotsky, for instance), maybe it's because they've somehow managed to tap into the same secret formula Peni and Killing Joke have been jealously guarding for three decades. Whatever it is, not only are Cross Sticched Eyes nudging a comfortable space for themselves on a very narrow shelf, they do it by owning, instead of aping, the sound. Put more succinctly, this is the best gloomy anarcho-punk inspired band I've heard in a good while. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY: Red Tape EP: 7"

Chicago rootsy rock with a thick, oozing film of gritty punk rock and dual male/female vocals. Reminiscent of early X but with a guitar that fancies the hardcore kids and not the country dweebs. The single song on the B side follows through at a much slower pace yet attacks with the same heart and blunt emotion, still retaining the kiss-and-kill promise. —Daryl (Residue, residuerecords@gmail.com)

DEAD GHOSTS / SMITH WESTERNS: Split: 7"

The Dead Ghosts' "She Likes It" is a low-fi droner in the vein of the Cramps playing Ricky Nelson covers. The vocals are swimming in effects to the point of being inaudible. I like it, but I hope it isn't all they do. The Smith Westerns have the same dynamic in "Tonight." Both songs have a warped take on simple '50s pop riffs. —Billups Allen (Bachelor)

DEEP SLEEP: Three Things at Once: CD

I'd heard this name from a bunch of my other friends, but never really checked them out, for whatever reason. Modern dudes taking a strong influence from '80s hardcore (Circle Jerks, Adolescents, etc.) that extended from the Descendents to more of the Cruz records roster (See: Title of this). I also like the convenience of having a bunch of other records in one nice little package. Neat. —Joe Evans III (Grave Mistake/Wallride)

DESGUACE: Yo Me Se Cuidar: LP

You know what's great about punk? Well, there's a lot, but one thing is the fact that there really are a ton of awesome records out there by bands you've never heard of. Take Desguace, for example. You've never heard of them, right? I hadn't before I got this record. I never would have known they existed. Still, this record is some killer shit. Its awesomeness is not subject to debate. This is vicious and fast. All of the lyrics are in Spanish, but that doesn't matter. It's the definition of punk. You could buy it and share it with your friends—none of whom have heard of this band either—and they'd all agree that this is the real deal. Or you could buy it and it could be your little secret. Your call. —MP Johnson (Trabuc)

DETOURNEMENT:

Screaming Response: CDEP

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no, it's not a Dan Yemin project or anything, it's the drummer Scott. The music is a bit everywhere: the first two tracks made this seem like a youth crewesque release, but later tracks show more of a Swingin' Utters kind of sound, then some other songs are closer to an older Bouncing Souls sound. It's cool, if you like your music schizophrenia flavored. —Bryan Static (Chunksaah/Pirate Press)

DISGUSTER: *Not So Sweet*: CD

The hit here is "Bloodbath," with its catchy chorus and vaguely Stones-gone-punk feel. The rest is all rock'n'punk swagger executed well enough to warrant more than one spin. —Jimmy Alvarado (Zodiac Killer)

DIVISION, THE: *Mantras*: CD

When I was in college, my friends and I used to get together on Sunday nights and have tea and sit and listen to *Hearts of Space*, an ambient radio show on NPR. Hippies maybe, but it was always a relaxing, mellow way to end the weekend while also listening to some creative, drone, space music. It seems as though *Mantras* could easily fit in with that type of crowd. The Division is the one-man act of Chicago musician Matthew Schultz who has done time in both Lab Report and Pigface. Eight of the nine songs on this album clock in at exactly six minutes and two seconds; the last track is exactly six minutes. Given the background of the artist, one might expect a little more aggressive, abrasive sound but, instead, the music has an ambient tone that also utilizes

some tribal beats and, more importantly, a number of instruments and styles of playing most identifiable from other cultures. In Indian religions mantras are deemed able to produce spiritual transformation. I don't know if that was Schultz's intention, but given the right setting (dark room, comfortable seat, a cup of tea, some incense), the tracks on *Mantras* might very well take you to a different place. —Kurt Morris (Lens)

DRUGLORDS OF THE AVENUES:

Sings Songs: CD

Johnny "Peebucks" Bonnel is back with another side project that's familiar and strange. Faster and less folksy than Filthy Thieving Bastards, though their version of "Drug Lords of the Avenues" on *Pappy Was a Pistol* is virtually the same as the one that appears here, only muddier with more feedback. Good old fashioned Bay Area punk rock'n'roll. —Jim Ruland (Red Scare, myspace.com/redscarepunk)

DRUNKDRIVER:

Knife Day b/w *January 2nd*: EP

Two-song EP by this New York trio. "Knife Day" starts off with a very deranged-sounding rant followed by total audio destruction via a blown-out guitar cab and a drummer bent on wearing out his drum skins after each use. "January 2nd" is the real barn burner on this record. It's the perfect soundtrack to a Voltron-like giant robot snorting a line of coke and then going on a destruction spree right before turning his sword on himself. No other

kind of information on this record other than the band's name and the song titles further adds to their mysterious charm. —Juan Espinosa (Fan Death)

EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING:

"Demon's Demands"

b/w *"I'm Guilty": 7"*

Primary Colours, the Eddy Current full-length on Goner, is an *album*, not just a haphazard sequence of songs. By that I mean all the pieces fit, and being so, the picture is much bigger and more complex than individual songs. The song sequence and where the album breaks between the two sides are nicely calculated. It's like they pick you up for a journey on the first side, buckle you in, and take you on for a great-ass ride with fascinating scenery rolling by the windows. This 7", if placed somewhere in the middle of that record (I'll leave it up to the experts to decide where), would fit perfectly (assuming that the vinyl could handle the length without compromising fidelity). The two songs on this 7" clock in a total of over eleven minutes of music. By themselves, they're a more difficult introduction to this great Australian band. Imagine two slower, heavy-pedaling, uphill bicycle rides instead of one, hitting the peak, then zooming down in a sprint on the B-side (in a Velvet Underground meets The Saints way). —Todd (Iron Lung)

EMOS, THE: *Quicker Than Khan*: CD

Crude, sloppy, rock'n'roll punk and I mostly mean that as a compliment. The songs are good, raging fun and show

a lot of potential. Despite this being punk world, I have to complain about excessively rough edges, where these folks need to step up their musicianship a little bit or put the time in on a couple more takes in the studio so the rhythm section does not occasionally veer off into musical trainwreck territory. Their crude and silly lyrics tend to match the musical attack by this trio from northwest England. These folks have some decent songs and a lot of heart so I am interested to see how this band progresses. —Jake Shut (Padded Cell, paddedcellrecords.co.uk)

END OF A YEAR: *Self-titled*: 7"

End Of A Year continues to be a shining example of what used to be amazing about hardcore. They're songwriters, plain and simple, with lyrics that go beyond the used up HC topics of friendship, betrayal, or heart break. These aren't a bunch of glammed-up, emo kids playing watered-down death metal with breakdowns... these are some true grit musicians writing about life. If you crossed the Revolution Summer sound with a trace of early Meat Puppets, then you'll get a sense of what they're doing. Fans of their last LP *Sincerely* will dig on this record. The trippy cover art was drawn by Erol Otus, illustrator of the early Dungeons & Dragons franchise. —Evan Katz (Deathwish, Deathwishinc.com)

ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CRUNCH:

Vicious Fishes: Cassette

This is the only tape I have ever gotten

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for review, and that fact endeared this band to me greatly. Make no mistake: this is not a home-recorded Memorex, but an actual, factual tape with the band name printed on the cassette and everything. How often do you see that? I was delighted when I popped the tape in and found it was actually good to boot. Solid, no-frills, shouty punk with a rootsy sensibility, if not an actual folk sound. The insert from their label calls them folk punk but I wouldn't go that far. There's a bit of that early Against Me! flavor, but this is way more melodic and happy. They cover the *Friends* theme song, for pete's sake. And it works. —Sarah Shay (Dead Tank)

EX HUMAN: Chicane b/w Detector: 7"
Solid trio playing Dead Boys' style snot rock'n'roll with good back ups and a bass player who does more than play just the roots of the chords. "Chicane" is catchier, but both songs are first rate. The vocals are good, but a bit lost in the mix; I'd like to hear more of them. But that's just mincing. It's a great record for fans of '77. —Billups Allen (Full Breach Kicks)

EXTREME NOISE TERROR: Law of Retaliation: CD
No surprises here from the pioneering godfathers of grindcore: nineteen tracks of blazing, crusty metal hardcore only taking a breath long enough for the mildly disturbing samples at the beginning of most of the tracks on the record. One thing that sets ENT apart from most of their peers is having two

lead vocalists and having two variants of the Cookie Monster is fundamentally more interesting than just one. Also, despite the somewhat challenging musical structures and ridiculous tempos, Extreme Noise Terror has a more appealing sense of melody and riffs than the legion of imitators that rose up in their wake. This is an above average release I would recommend to individuals not normally prone to listening to such an extreme form of punk rock music. —Jake Shut (Deep Six)

EYE FOR AN EYE: Cisz: CD
These guys have a definite '90s hardcore sound, with the metallic elements, clean and thick production, studio trickery with vocal effects, and industrial crunch, but they are definitely European in sound and delivery; and, thankfully, not the American posturing of that time period. At times, they sound like a cross between La Fraction and Damnation AD: tuneful with a solid punch. Not exactly my favorite style, but not bad, and if you're into this sort of sound, you will be pleasantly surprised. —M.Avrq (Pasazer)

FACE, LE: Isolation: CD
These malcontents fall squarely between the arty minimalism of the Urinals/100 Flowers and the full-bore psychosis of the Mentally Ill. What that means to the consuming public is you get thirteen tracks of obstreperous punk rock that is concerned about finding an appropriate pigeonhole to fit in as the bands that influenced them. If you like it unfriendly

and unruly, this'll do the trick, but if you're looking for something that'd fit nicely on punk stations like Disney Radio, you're pissing up the wrong rope, kid. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deadbeat)

FAGGOT: Self-titled: CD
This band has shock down to a science. Offensive band name? Yep. Album artwork covered with images of penises and anuses slathered in neon green? Absolutely. Video directed by Lloyd Kaufman of Troma films fame? It's included on the CD. But that shit's the easy part. It's not worth anything if the music doesn't rock. It has no value if you don't listen to the album so many times that you find yourself at work in the office or grocery store or wherever with random lines from "The Cleaner" running through your head. Maybe they accidentally spill out of your lips and a work buddy catches you quietly singing "Pull your legs over your head." As you're dragging the line out, trying to make it sound as caustic as possible, your face turns red and you realize that you need to keep that shit in your head. Perv. —MP Johnson (Profane Existence/Selfish Satan)

FLAGITIOUS IDIOSYNCRASY IN THE DILAPIDATION: Self-titled: LP
I have absolutely no idea what Flagitious Idiosyncrasy In The Dilapidation's name means, and I'm too lazy to look for a dictionary. It looks like Carcass lyrics to me. The music, however, is undeniably brutal grindcore and even a dolt such as myself can understand that. Take the

precision of Discordance Axis, throw in Drop Dead's crustier leanings and wrap them in the modern grind styles of Hewhocorrupts. Now change all of those bands' members into women. FID may very well be the world's first and fastest all-female grindcore band. Japan has never been short of bands with strong female presence (Melt Banana, Romantic Gorilla), but FID is, thankfully, here to cover all the bases. Pummeling heaviness and whirlwind speed all brought to you courtesy of four cute women who look like they weigh less than their instruments. It's always awesome to see the ladies kick down the door of a sausage fest of a genre then proceed to musically kick everyone in the balls. —Juan Espinosa (Six Weeks)

FLATFOOT: Wild Was Our Mercy: LP
Flatfoot play straight-up country music in that way that a lot of punks tend to do these days. You can just tell when someone has listened to an ungodly amount of Paul Westerberg, respecting the hell out of him and his song crafting abilities. Fans of Whiskey & Co. should definitely track this hand-screened, hand-numbered (out of 300) LP down. —Daryl (Los Diaper)

FUZZTONES: Horny as Hell: CD
Nowhere near as, um, fuzzy as I remember the last time I heard anything by 'em—which I freely admit was, like, twenty years ago, so it might be my memory that's fuzzy—but, on the whole, this ain't all that bad. The tunes are still steeped in the same

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'60s stew they've always been, but the production makes 'em sound like the '70s incarnation of a '60s band revisiting their old stomping grounds with a horn section (hence the title) in tow. Dunno (and really don't care) how the purists are gonna feel, but this could've gone down much, much worse. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Fun)

GATEWAY DISTRICT, THE:

Some Days You Get the Thunder: CD

Debut full length from a Minneapolis super group that's self described as "fancy the way McDonald's ketchup is fancy," featuring ex-members of Rivethead and The Soviettes. The record sounds incredibly like the later, with Maren/Sturgeon providing about half of the vocals, but the other singer sounds just like Kim Shattuck, with just a little bit of country swagger that also translates into the rest of the songs. Think of it as like *LP III 1/2*, if you will. I absolutely love the hell out of this. —Joe Evans III (It's Alive)

GEIN AND THE GRAVEROBBER:

Gruesome Twosome: CD

Two discs packed full of horror-inspired surf music. Disc one is the band's *Songs in the Key of Evil* album, along with the *Humanoids From the Deep* EP. It's perfectly executed, but bland. Disc two is where the good stuff is. Their *Passion of the Anti-Christ* album draws inspiration from metal. It's about as ominous as you can get while still staying in the sunny realm of surf. —MP Johnson (Necro-Tone)

G.G. ALLIN AND THE CAROLINA

SHITKICKERS: Self-titled: 7"

Navigating GG Allin's discography can be perilous. People will tell you that it's not worth the effort. On the other hand, there are people who believe the man did no wrong. The reality is somewhere in the middle. These three tunes he recorded with the Carolina Shitkickers—Antiseen's Jeff Clayton and some other rednecks—are an essential stop for anyone interested in hearing what GG could do. Recorded not long before his overdose exit, these songs represent his outlaw country side. On the A side, you get GG the scumfuc storyteller. "Layin' up with Linda" is a murder ballad that is disturbing in its absolute coldness. After getting bored and deciding to kill the woman he was shacking up with, the narrator's only regret is that they had some fun together—doing drugs and fucking—and they wouldn't be able to anymore. The B side is the best, closing out with GG's cover of David Allan Coe's "Long Haired Redneck," renamed and rewritten as "Outlaw Scumfuc." GG's version cranks up the antagonistic attitude of the original. The only thing keeping it from sounding flat-out belligerent are the little details here and there that are almost endearing, like how, between talking about fighting and drinking whiskey by the gallon, he adds, "I live on peanut butter sandwiches, I don't care." Details like that—reminders that GG was a human and not a circus freak—are hard to come by in his music. That's why this record is essential. —MP Johnson (Zodiac Killer)

GIANT HAYSTACKS / YOUNG

OFFENDERS: Spit: 12"

Giant Haystacks: The cheaty math is a complex, clear, powerful distillation of Minutemen and Wire. Like grain alcohol, contained, you can see right through it; little distortion. But, when you twist off the cap and take a deep drink, that's when things can get interesting, when things burn. Their five songs are simultaneous hand-wringers and hand-clappers. A dancing paranoia. A celebratory time with your head in an over-sized mouse trap, uncertain when it will snap shut. And it's this garroting with a smile that makes the Giant Haystacks spurt far beyond a band that's merely comfortably looking backwards through their musical rearview mirror. They have since broken up and some members have re-congealed as The Airfix Kits. Young Offenders: This may sound horrible, but the Young Offenders make me so happy, that if I was shot in the back of the head during one of their songs, hey, at least I'd die with a big smile on my once-face. I imagine this was a similar reaction to people first hearing The Buzzcocks and The Undertones. It's fast, poppy, and melodic, but the hooks are viral instead of sugar-evaporative. The heft and tumble are undeniably what keeps the songs clean and clanky, like rocks in a washing machine; polishing with each successive tumble on the turntable. Highly recommended. —Todd (625)

GLEAM GARDEN /

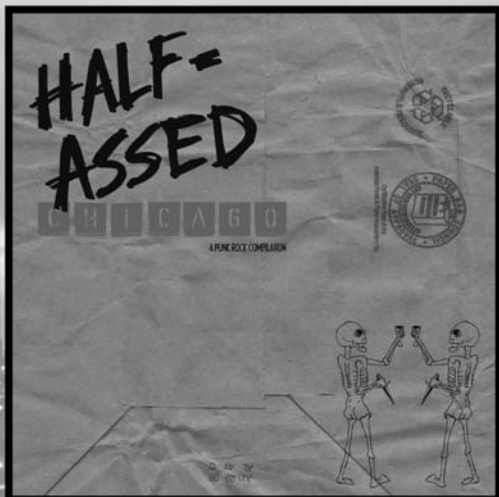
THE TIM VERSION: Split: 7" EP

Gleam Garden: It's not that hard to imagine if The Replacements, when they were sixteen and seventeen, instead of forming in Minneapolis, were three Japanese dudes on the other side of the world, coming up with their own version of *Stink* in 2009. Far from a complete rip, Gleam Garden's two songs are wailing, yearning snaps of songs that remind me that youth is a state of mind and geography is often secondary to the real estate between one's ears. The Tim Version: Sing about a tree without irony. The tree is equated to a dearly missed uncle. It's this direct honesty, these emotions-laid-bare without apology or overly precious metaphor that's one of the engines of The Tim Version's power. The other is that they're just a collective badass: commanding playing, erecting small houses with each song. All I need to know this world is fucked-in-the-A is that a purely rockin' band like The Tim Version is largely marginalized because they don't have a "hook" beyond genuinely great songs, or a "look" beyond firm handshakes, easy smiles, "stupid" tattoos, and being fuckin' great dudes. The second song is a tender J Church cover. —Todd (Snuffy Smiles)

HEXTALLS: *Call It a Comeback: LP*

When I put this record on, a loud groan erupted from my body. My ears folded over on their own, trying to block the music out. My body struggled toward the window for a quick escape, but I stood strong and listened. The songs

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sound so formulaic that I found it hard to differentiate one from the next. They all went on way too long. I sat through lines like "Michael Myers is a big homo" and songs with titles like "Puckward Nipples the 3rd." My stamina paid off with the moderately rocking "Unicorn Rider," during which I thought that this band could have done something nice with the 7" format. Then they rewarded my perseverance by slapping me in the face and closing out the first side with a phone message from the *Doctor Phil* show in which one of the show's people said that she sent an e-mail to one of the guys in the band. Yeah, it's that exciting. So is this record. —MP Johnson (House Party)

HITCHHIKERS, THE: *Intellectual Properties of the Minimal Mind*: CD

Ex-Humpers and ex-Bleeders make up this band that reminds me of the Hyenas, the Supersuckers, and Nashville Pussy. You know, the types of bands who claim to be dangerous ex-felons and boast that "anything can happen at our shows," when, in reality, everything about their live performances is choreographed—the guitarist's poses, the bass players facial expressions, the drummers stick twirls—and predictable. I didn't hear anything exciting on this disc and rolled my eyes and chuckled at the tough guy band photo they have superimposed on top of the CD. Real bad assed. —Josh Benke (Zodiac Killer)

HOSTAGES OF AYATOLLAH: *AntHOAlogy*: CD

A very nicely packaged anthology of

tracks from one of the best American hardcore-inspired German bands of the '80s. They knew how to thrash things up with the best of 'em, but they weren't afraid in the least to make things catchy and tuneful at the same time, though the singer occasionally sounds like Snake from Voivod during that band's *War and Pain* era. Included is a fairly packed booklet with lotsa info on the band (though yer gonna need to be pretty fluent in German 'cause that's mostly what it's written in) and a DVD with live footage and some videos for songs that were originally filmed to be part of a German punk film that was never released. Definitely worth hunting down. —Jimmy Alvarado (x-mist.de)

ISIS: *Wavering Radiant*: CD/2xLP

I've always considered myself a nominal Isis fan. I had all their albums but didn't listen to them much. However, I started reading some reviews of their latest album, *Wavering Radiant*, and was amazed how positive they all were so I decided to check it out. And I am very glad I did. This is easily Isis' best work and it starts with the artwork. Designed by frontman Aaron Turner, it is gorgeous, especially for the LP. And speaking of Turner, his vocals on this album showcase his ability to maneuver between low barking and pleasantly melodic. It complements the sound wonderfully. It seems as though his vocals are about being another instrument more than the exact content of the words. This is okay because, lyrically, I have no idea what's going

on, as Turner's verses are as cryptic as ever. The music, as usual, is the key with Isis. While a Neurosis (and maybe a little Mastodon?) influence can still be heard in the background throughout the album, the songs distinctly belong to Isis. It can be hard to pin a label on the band. They're not quite metal but they're not ambient by any means, either. Like other albums, it rotates between crushing and pleasant, brutal and gently floating. And every time you listen to the beauty of the album, Isis isn't afraid to turn it over to the harsh. However, there is also a texture here—primarily through effective use of the keyboards—that wasn't around on the other albums, or at least not utilized to the extent as on *Wavering Radiant*. These seven songs may not come out and grab you the first time through. Seeing as they're meant to be listened to as a cohesive album, *Wavering Radiant* may require some commitment. Turn the lights out, lie down on your bed, put on the headphones, and turn it up. Unless the releases for the second half of 2009 blow me away, *Wavering Radiant* is easily making my top five of the year. —Kurt Morris (Ipecac, ipecac.com)

JOEY CAPE: *Bridge*: CD

I put this CD in my laptop and my first impression was of intricate, mostly folky acoustic guitar with slight Latin jazz elements and throaty, melodically droning vocals. I'm listening to this and thinking, "It's nice, but how the heck did this get to *Razorcake*?" Then I look up Joey Cape on Wikipedia. Then

I have a good, hearty laugh at myself. If you're a Lagwagon fan but have never heard singer Cape's solo work, this is definitely not what you might expect. Cape's songs are delicate and earthy, mostly downtempo, but occasionally picking up the beat. "Canoe" almost sounds like Simon & Garfunkel (using vocal clips of his toddler was maybe a bit too cheesy for me). This is one of those albums you can really enjoy and still put on when your mom comes over. Favorite track has to be "The Ramones Are Dead." —Sarah Shay (Suburban Home)

JON SNODGRASS: *Visitor's Band*: CD

It takes time to distill a crooner voice into an appealing raspy tone. Jon Snodgrass has the scars to back the bark in his rootsy whiskey tenor. Being in bands for almost twenty years now, Snodgrass continues perfecting his voice with his solo project. *Visitor's Band* stylistically locks into the same vein as other Drag The River records but, of course, it's Snodgrass calling all the shots. These tracks are also less twangy than the full band efforts. To his appeal, he's showing no signs of getting any younger, but Snodgrass surely isn't letting that get in the way of his song craft. He's already done shows with Joey Cape of Lagwagon to promote his solo stuff and Drag The River has shows scheduled for this summer. With the combination of tireless work and a life devoted to music, Snodgrass knows what nails to leave unhammered in his songs. Surprisingly, he's able to make

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alt-country both more accessible and harder edged with this work. "Not That Rad" is a fine mix of rock, country, and pop. Perhaps it's not rad, but there are eleven fine tunes here. —N.L. Dewart (Suburban Home)

KALASHNIKOV: *Angoscia-Rock: 7" EP*

At full tilt, it's stratospheric, melodic modern hardcore from Italy, along the fitful, beautiful lines of Poland's El Banda and France's La Fraction. When it slows down, instead of getting metally or chonka-chonka, veers into Human League-style new wave with slippery eel synthesizers and languid horns. That's a tough transition and Kalashnikov seem equally comfortable in both modes. The accompanying thirty-six page booklet is more like a book, the vinyl is gorgeous, and the sound is impeccable. For those who aren't afraid of bands without genre blinders on, I highly recommend seeking this out. —Todd (Self-released, kalashni.net)

KILLING CALIFORNIA: *Bones & Sand: CDEP*

This is harsh California hardcore whose primary fault lies in its unwillingness to jump into risks. The intensely throaty vocals resemble those of Fucked Up's Pink Eyes (not a poor model) and the group's impatient sound moves like a time bomb charging towards zeroes at burning speeds. The frustrating part is that the whole disc flies by without any marked changes in volume or tempo, turning the barrage of blasts into something

lacking punch. Abrasion is produced by contrasts. Without slower/softer pauses to counteract the hurtling forward, hardcore loses some of its provocative effect. —Reyan Ali (Basement)

KINTARO: *Power Love: 7"*

This is some fantastically bummed out punk rock. This Tennessee three-piece rips shit up on the four tracks here, with some seriously catchy and depressing tunes. With big, pounding drums and hand claps, this is somewhere between a mopey Japanese Monsters and a tuneful, power pop Off With Their Heads, or the masculine equivalent of Little Lungs. In any case, it's terrific. —Jeff Proctor (Baby Don't)

LAPINPOLTHAJAT: *Self-titled: 7"*

A fantastic record from a band that supposedly formed in the '90s and didn't release anything until now. I think that was a good thing. This band from Finland seemed to have taken their time to hone their craft: a grouping of songs which are tight and aggressive with an underlying feel of melody bleeding through. Taking the more punk sound of a band like Appendix and adding the melody of early Asta Kask are songs which are not overdone and straight to the point. You can hear the band taking influences from their early '80s forefathers and adding their own flair, giving it modern day relevance. I also like that they didn't seem to have rushed the recording process, choosing their song selection precisely. Having listened to this numerous times, there is not one filler in the bunch. It's

a well-produced recording that retains a rawness that this style of music needs. This 7" is pleasant surprise from a band that I will definitely keep an eye out for. —Donofthedeath (Heat Wave)

LAST LIGHTS: *No Past, No Present, No Future: CD*

This is a discography of sorts, cataloguing all the tracks recorded by Last Lights before the death of their lead singer, Dominic. If I recall correctly, they received a lot of praise, and for good reason: these songs pretty much kick ass. This is hardcore that's not in the deep-voiced-tough-guy vein. This is one of the most bittersweet releases I've ever heard. —Bryan Static (Think Fast)

LEATHERVEIN: *Self-titled: LP*

This record does not belong on this plane of existence. The cover alone—a painting of a leather jacket-clad demonic metalhead wielding his glowing green, laser-shooting, toxic sludge-filled guitar penis—is clearly from some alternate reality in which the citizens of the world are governed by the unseen power of heavy metal. The music only confirms that some sort of inter-dimensional wormhole must have temporarily opened up and allowed this to slide out of that magnificent metal realm and into Razorcake headquarters. It's a searing mix of early thrash and new wave of British heavy metal, combined with lethal doses of punk and pure rock'n'roll. The songs move fast, but refuse to leave you in the dust. They carry you with them on the sidecars of their guitar

solo cycles, while the singer's cesspool triumphant voice guides the way through the darkness ahead, grinning. Yes, this is truly from another realm where metal is everything. The back cover says it's from Denmark, but I know better. —MP Johnson (Hjernesvind)

LENGUAS LARGAS: *Self-titled: 7" EP*

I don't mind weird if it rocks. I don't mind psychrock if the "rock" part's not just a handy post-it note whacked onto the side of masturbation. Lenguas Largas has the Roky Erickson Weird-O-Meter pegged. They're also carrying a mile-long locomotion's worth of quarry-grade rock, freshly blasted from the earth. Featuring the voice and guitar of Isaac of The Swing Ding Amigos and Shark Pants, the drumming of both Dickie (Shark Pants) and Chris Kohler (Sexy), and Southwestern stalwart Mark Beef, this makes total Tucson sense. It's a nice counterpoint to the Swing Ding's full assault and sidles nicely up to The Resonars. —Todd (Tic Tac Totally)

LORD BY FIRE: *Self-titled: 7"*

Lord By Fire had the unfortunate luck to be called Sword back in the day... right when the other band The Sword broke out big... like mega-butt fuck big. So big that Sword kind of just disappeared for a while. Well, time has passed, and the band's returned with the new moniker Lord By Fire, and a kickass little 7" record, filled with two doom-soaked tracks. The band manages to deliver that thick, messy stoner sound, while still being technical and tight with the

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songwriting. Highly recommended for fans of this genre. Let's just hope that another band with the name Lord By Fire doesn't suddenly explode, forcing these guys back out of view for another four years. —Evan Katz (Forcefield)

LOST CONTROLS:

American Action: 7" EP

In their lesser moments, Lost Controls come across as a more bar-rocky New Bomb Turks. In their greater moments, they start plowing the adjacent fields that Scared Of Chaka tended nearly a decade ago. Their own musical corn is starting to bud and there's something interesting and promising in the developing kernels. Let's just see if they're adept at both harvesting and crop rotation with the next batch of songs, or if we're dealing with baby corn that goes on salads. Worth keeping on the radar, for sure. —Todd (Thou Shalt, myspace.com/lostcontrols)

LOT LIZARDS: Self-titled: 10"

Furious lo-fi fuzz and caterwauling out of jolly old London town. Bears some resemblance to Black Time, but Lot Lizards is less sludgier and with just a guitar, drum kit and, on some songs, an organ, they're a bit lighter on their feet. The second side is a little more tuneful than the first with some interesting arrangements on "Dead Girls" that culminates with a long wedge of silence. "Dysfunctional Agenda," the instrumental that follows, makes the package poignant somehow. —Jim Ruland (Yakisakana)

MAGNETIX: Positively Negative: LP

Veterans of the French drudgey fuzz punk scene with dark echoes of the Blowtops, the boy-girl duo Magnetix have been churning out good static for a while now. But this is their best effort yet. Echo fuzz pedal set to infinity can get old, but the Magnetix keep it interesting throughout the whole LP, with equal amounts catchy chords and black-glasses-cool mood. There are a million bands aping the 1960s garage glory but it's fun here: a pounding reverb party that can send you through time when played backwards. If you've liked any of their singles or thought they had something even remotely worth checking out, this is the album to get. —Speedway Randy (Born Bad, bornbad.fr)

MAKABERT FYND / NICE IDIOT: Split: EP

Here's the first installment of the *Fuck Your Scene, Kid* series from Kramium (who are off to a great start—four releases so far, and all of 'em great). Makabert Fynd slam out three absolute ragers that are heavy, fast, and urgent. It's a noisy affair, with thrashy tempos giving way to mid-paced breaks, before throwing themselves back into the sonic storm. They remind me of early DS-13, when that band first came out and had something to prove. Makabert Fynd, so far, are a great band, which I'm sure we'll be hearing more of soon. Nice Idiot are ripping hardcore that sounds like a mix Y2K thrash meets the Zero Boys and The Freeze. Really hyper and urgent with quick

tempo changes, a feeling of looseness, everything teetering on coming apart, and vocals that bounce back and forth between shouting and talking. Seek this one out and don't stop until you have it. —M.Avrq (Kramium, kram.se)

MAKE DO AND MEND:

Bodies of Water: CDEP

Melancholic and gruff as an all-night drive on tour, Make Do And Mend play earnest, chugging post-hardcore that would fit on a road trip mixtape right in between Split Lip and pre-stoner Planes Mistaken For Stars. The music chugs forward like a just-tuned-up tour van, and this CD blows by like a drunken set in a living room. I've been playing it on the kitchen boombox a lot, wishing I was going on tour this summer. —CT Terry (Panic)

MANIC ATTRACTS:

Shut It b/w Teenage Teenage: 7"

Poundy smashy garage din with lots of reverb on the guitar! From what i can hear of the vocals, the dude sort of sounds like a chick, or at least like that dude from the Washouts before his voice changed. I like it when i put a song into Audacity and it looks like a solid horizontal stripe too. **BEST SONG:** "Shut It" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Teenage Teenage" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** This sleeve is printed with two colors of ink, and both are shades of green. —Rev. Norb (Yakisakana)

MARGINAL MAN: Identity: LP

Dischord is re-issuing a load of their early hardcore staples on vinyl with digital downloads included. Among them is Marginal Man's *Identity*, a classic that has gone in and out of print too many times. Here is another chance to pick up this DC hardcore staple. Marginal Man stood out in that they could play well and had lots of whoa-whoa-whoas in the mix. There is a seminal lyric in "Friend": "If I say something that you don't like, just hear me out I might be right." Find enclosed loads of songs about friendship and, yes, identity. Timeless and essential. Also on the list of essentials being re-issued on vinyl is the Void side of the Faith/Void split and an obscure band called Minor Threat. —Billups Allen (Dischord)

MARX, THE: Self-titled: CD

This is fast, silly, basic punk rock music. Most people know what to expect from song titles like "(She's Got A) Manifesto" and "Zombie Hookers from Outer Space." But, hey, at least The Marx deliver on their title musings with distorted blues-based rock progressions and gritty vocals. This is nine tracks of a good time that go by too fast. —N.L. Dewart (Zodiac Killer)

MASAKARI: Eden Compromised: 7"

For a debut release, this one can stand with the best of the modern day crust bands. It has the heaviness of Hellshock, the power of Holy Mountain, and the epic sound of Tragedy. The recording is big with a chest-pounding sound

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that is hard to ignore. The vocals are deep but not guttural while growling the words into your face. The guitar sound is crunching with sharp riffs that are metallic with the right amount of distortion. Bass and drums bring on the deep tones and rhythms with thunder. I'm truly impressed with this output. If they come ever to town, I want to experience this live. —Donofthedeat (Halo Of Flies)

MIG & MIN VEN: Self-titled: Cassette
Unfortunately, I don't speak Danish. Fortunately, I don't have to in order to tell you that this tape rocks. Mig & Min Ven is a garage rock/punk duo that holds their own with a stripped-down sound of just guitar, drums, and vocals. I've consulted my translator and their name means "Me & My Friend." There's no gimmicks here, just straightforward pop songs that will be your friends, too, if you can get a hold of this tape. —N.L. Dewart (Rabalder)

MIGRAINE: Self-titled: 7"EP
Unequal parts Neos and Black Sabbath (wait for the Sabbath on the B-side), ground-in, trebly, stained hardcore without a lot of containment when it's going full speed. Think of a car that's been in a serious wreck but is still street legal after using a hammer to prevent the crushed-in quarter panel from puncturing a tire. When it slows down, they drag the doom chains. On the cover is none other than the self-designated "Coryphaeus of Science," the "Brilliant Genius of Humanity,"

and "Gardener of Human Happiness" Joseph Stalin. —Todd (Stress Domain)

MINORITY BLUES BAND: Momentary Beautiful Burnout: CD
A collection of outtakes, comp tracks, and split releases bundled into one release for your listening pleasure. And you will get much pleasure from this record, I promise you, my friends. Jagged guitars, vocals that veer in and out of Squirrel Bait country, and rock-solid song structures overall. "Metaphysical Burst" is my favorite song title here, but there really isn't a full on clunker to harp on about. Bass lines bubble along with consistency, drums supply the back beat without being overwrought, and the guitars mesh pretty seamlessly with the vocals. A great power trio that should be missed by many, but, hopefully, this release will be enjoyed by more than a few. —Sean Koepenick (Snuffy Smiles)

MOTHER SPEED: Bizarre Reality: 7"
This band has a lot going for them on side one in that the singer sounds like Spike from early D.R.I. recordings and the songs are short blasts of skate rock in that vein. That part is right on, well done, and awesome. There is some stoner-type riffage thrown in that bothers me. The riffs aren't bad, but it doesn't work for me. The second side is just a mélange of noise including horns and shit. Again, nothing wrong there, just not a fan of that. The cover art is a good mural of some baddies wearing goat skulls, but it looks like stoner rock artwork, further

confusing an old punk. I like the songs when they speed off, and, overall, this dynamic prevails on side one. The record is good and worth getting into, just confusing to old people. Also confusing to old people is two email addresses, two mspace addresses and a street address included on a 7". —Billups Allen (Here's Your Warning)

MOUThBREATHER / ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CRUNCH: Split 7"
Mouthbreather's shouty combination of rawk and emo-core is indigenous to sweaty Richmond house shows. It reminds me of a show I was at in 2001, when two of the guys who are now in Mouthbreather were underage and sent me on a beer run for them and their roommates. The haul totaled nine 40s, which I arranged on my skateboard and wheeled across a convenience store floor to the register, while lotto-playing crackheads cheered. Environmental Youth Crunch sounds like a roman candle fight on a Florida beach where you see one of your friends get hit in the nuts by a firecracker. Especially if that firecracker was a short blast of pop punk that sounded like a mix of Crimpshrine and The Bananas. Baseheads and pyrotechnics aside, this is a truly kicking record that gets bonus points because a.) the bands sound like they'd be in different subsets of "the scene" and b.) the guitars on the first Mouthbreather song remind me of late '70s Judas Priest. —CT Terry (rorschachrecords.net)


MYLES DECK AND THE FUZZ: Police Cops: CD
Tepid Radio Birdman-inspired proto-punk. Proficient but too by-the-numbers. —Ryan Leach (From Here To There)

NARCOLEPTIC YOUTH: Airplay: CD
When I was a young teen, Dr. Strange Records was my mailorder of choice. They carried the best in all things street punk and have continuously released excellent street punk albums. Narcoleptic Youth's *Airplay* is a fine example proving that Dr. Strange has not missed a beat. Although this hasn't been my cup of tea for quite some time, it is hard to deny that this album is a great collection of street anthems and not cringe-worthy at that. For me, the most exciting part of this album are the bonus tracks. Among them there is an Adicts and a Damned cover, two excellent choices of songs in my book. Also as a side note, it seems that my CD has been autographed by the band, even though it was completely shrink wrapped. I wonder if they signed them all before they were packaged or if I just got a special copy. —Noah W. K. (Dr. Strange)

NEPTUNE'S FOLLY: Self-titled: LP
Full of ear wormy tunes and textures, I haven't been able to get these melodies out of my skull. This debut record is stuffed to the gills with steady punk the likes of Fugazi, spliced with the slick hardcore progressions of G.B.H. My only disappointment here is the foggy sound quality. Still, Neptune

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shines through as some of the best hardcore/garage punk I've heard this year. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Milk & Chocolate)

NOFX: *Coaster*: CD

We've all listened to NOFX. You've heard one album, you've heard them all in terms of format. There's usually a horn solo track supplied by El Hefe, a political song, and plenty of humor: "I Am An Alcoholic," "We Call It America," and "First Call" respectively. They've been making music for nearly twenty-six years now and *Coaster* proves that NOFX still has their humor. In "Creeping out Sara," Fat Mike sings about his chance meeting with Sara, the reported other lesbian twin, of pop group Tegan and Sara. Needless to say, their conversation includes "threesomes" and "fourgies." And no, the humor doesn't stop there, as even the CD title *Coaster* is a gimmick stab at using their CD as a coaster and the vinyl version they appropriately titled *Frisbee*. But, on the vinyl the track, "Sara" is substituted for "Tegan" and the lyrics change appropriately. But, hey, they are twins and as the lyrics go, "That's when I realized it was Sara, or maybe it was Tegan." If only I could sell my dick and fart jokes to the record store... I guess Fat Mike and company get to have the last laugh once again. —N.L. Dewart (Fat)

NOISE ATTACK / INOCULATORS: *Split: 7"*

Noise Attack are dirty, trashy, noisy

(apropos!) punk rock; nothing terribly flashy and solid all the way around. Nothing disappointing in their two songs, except maybe that I'd like a couple more tunes to strike an appropriate balance with the four songs by the Inoculators on the b-side. The Inoculators stuff was a bit of a disappointment for me, however. Based on the *Dropped Their Brains* LP, I expected something that had a greater variety of sounds than this does. Their tunes on this split were in the vein of the punk-driven tunes on the LP, rather than the ska-oriented stuff. It was more one-dimensional than what I expected, but do not take that wholly as a negative; what they've put on this record is certainly strong. —The Lord Kveldulfr (inoculators.com, mspace.com/noiseattack)

NORTH LINCOLN: *Midwestern Blood*: CD

Another power trio, this one is actually still very much active. I went back to see if maybe *Snakes and Arrows Live* was in the bottom of my box to make a rocking trifecta—but to no avail. Three dudes from Michigan who all play in other bands, but make magic when this baby starts wailing. Their practice space actually looks like a bomb shelter. I've seen homeless people that have nicer lean-to's than this, but I digress. The grit must seep into their songwriting, since it's certainly raw and sincere at the same time. "All This Time" threatens to buckle under its own weight—which is a good thing. "Weight of The World" is another

killer song on this one. Get this CD. It won't leave your "go-to" rack. —Sean Koepenick (No Idea)

NTARES: *Gentlemen, Start Your Engines*: CD

Noisy, trashy, high-speed Italians. Think of a poppier Zeke. —Jessica T (Zodiac Killer)

NUESTRA SANGRE: *Violenta Nominus*: CD

The last time I was in Tecate, Mexico, I went into a liquor store and there were all kinds of punk rock posters taped up on the wall. I communicated (very poorly) with the kid behind the counter and he handed me this CD. It's full-on hardcore, goat-ripping Mexican metalcore. A couple months ago I heard that Jesus Isordia, a guitar player for Nuestra Sangre, was shot and killed in Tijuana in the violence that's swallowed up the borderlands. Fucking sad. —Jim Ruland (Cafeina, mspace.com/cafeinariotradiorecords)

O PIONEERS!!!: *Neon Creeps*: CD

O Pioneers!!! hold so much promise. With its sharp typography-heavy cover, the endearing *Neon Creeps* is racked with ruminations about depression, fuck-ups, and could-have-beens. Admirably, a voice soaked in Hot Water Music spills therapeutic doses of piss and vinegar but there's too much easily revealed here. *Creeps* is weighed down by a forced sense of forthrightness. The guitars do give off warm tints of early '90s indie/pop punk

(one track's intro recalls a Jawbreaker B-side) but the material here is lacking the overwhelming kick that it should have. The song structures come arranged with a sense of uncertainty. By editing their material for a sense of evenness and holding a few words back, O Pioneers!!! could be crafting something so bold that it brings them to mind rather than their archetypes. —Reyan Ali (Asian Man)

OKIE DOKIE: *"Badhammer" b/w "Power": 7"*

This one-sided 7" contains two buzzin' songs of stream-of-thought lyrics and rapid firepower musicianship. When they perform live, the fact that they use a drum machine is kind of distracting, but on record I can't tell the difference. Mikey's demented delivery and head-scratching lyrics heighten how odd this band really is. I saw them play along with a strobe light one time and even though I felt like I was gonna vomit multiple times, it was great. —Daryl (Goodbye Boozy)

OMENS, THE: *Send Black Flowers*: CD

The Standells hire a 'roid-raged Mike Tyson to deliver repeated knockout blows to the nards while they do some serious ear-pummelin' via grade-A punked up fuzz rock. It's not often I verbalize my approval whilst a disc is on, but I gotta admit I had the window down and was screamin' "fuck yeah!" pretty much throughout its initial spin. Pretty nifty when that

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PANT HOOTS, THE: Take off Your Hat: CD

The world being what it is, it's hard being a lo-fi one man band with pleasantly off, Hooverville, vaudevillian, Pynchon-describing-the-West lyrics and not get a Bob Log III comparison. The Hoot Pants is slightly less horny than BLIII. Hoot Pants is sorta like using a photocopier to alter the same image again and again. Blow it up to the dots, cut it out, paste it at strange angles; grit becomes art, "mistakes" are part of the process. The familiar—guitar, bass drum, tambourine-on-a-stick—is staring back at you in a strange, floating duct tape eyeball way. My only nitpick is that I wish the vocals were up a bit more, since the lyrics really shine. But, hey, I really like the bike horn toots. —Todd (Earwig Acres)

PANTYHOSE: Pantyhose Pantyhose Pantyhose: Cassette

After three tracks, this galloping rush of lo-fi garage makes me want more. Pantyhose's demo sounds like it was written and recorded in under two hours (this is a compliment) using partially broken instruments retrieved from the recesses of a pawn shop. In a good way, the adolescent silliness reminds me of this awful band that a friend from high school was briefly in (however, Pantyhose's line of "I ask [my record store] to play my favorite selection / but I only really want his erection" trumps

all of the dreck they drew up). This brisk and unrefined material was made for ten minute-long impromptu sets at Midwestern dives. According to their MySpace, they haven't done anything lately, so let me proclaim a formal plea: Pantyhose, please make more material. —Reyan Ali (Self-released, myspace.com/pantyhoseband)

PATROL: Zirconium: CD

Patrol's follow-up to their 2006 debut (and one of my favorite albums of that year), *Destinations*, has finally arrived. *Destinations* holds a special place in my heart, as it was an album that I listened to almost constantly for the first few months when I moved to Seattle back in 2006. Patrol is also from Seattle, and seeing them live that summer made me appreciate the album all that much more. Thus, *Zirconium* had its work cut out for it in order to impress me. While the debut had some songs stretching into the five- or six-minute mark, this album finds almost all of its eight songs over the six-minute mark, with the first track clocking in at ten minutes (a ballsy move that works) and another track coming in at eleven minutes. Thankfully, Patrol's songs fit naturally into their time frame. In other words, there are not three or four minutes of noise (with the exception of the somewhat creepy-sounding but wonderfully named track "Skullfuckin' Sufjan Stevens") within a song. The length of the songs and the fact that the album starts out with a ten-minute track obviously shows that Patrol has no interest in commercial appeal and just

wants to rock. Hard. And that they do. I can definitely hear growth with Patrol's sound from their debut. It's clear there is a prog influence on the band (is that Tool I hear?) but some of lead singer/guitarist Doug Lorig's math rock background (his past bands include Roadside Monument) comes through, too. Like Tool, Patrol has a melodic angle and beyond that, some of the guitars also are reminiscent of Isis, although I probably am only saying that because I've been listening to so much of the new Isis album. However, both Patrol albums and the first four Isis albums were both recorded by Matt Bayles (Pearl Jam, Mastodon, Minus The Bear) so there is that common connection. The lyrics are tough to crack, but there are a few catchy lyrics, even if they don't make total sense. Lorig's unambiguous, sung vocals are easy to follow and pair well with the music. *Zirconium* is good and definitely worth picking up if you enjoyed Patrol's first album, or any of the bands I mentioned as influences. Is it better than *Destinations*? No. But I'm more than happy to give it time to convince me otherwise. —Kurt Morris (Stiff Slack, myspace.com/stiffslackrecords)

PEAR OF THE WEST: Passed Out the Wasted: CD

A self-described incomplete discography from this female-led band from Japan. The songs span from the years 2000-2008. Not sure if they broke up or not. But one thing for sure is they have that early pop punk sound from

the late '90s to early '00s of bands like Discount, Co-Ed, and Servo. In fact, I see in the liner notes that they did a split with the latter. Songs are sung in English with a heavy Japanese accent, which give them a unique feel. You can hear the growth of the band from their humble beginnings: Raw but poppy at first, then you can hear the evolution with the musicianship and production. I don't listen to much pop punk lately, but the later material is infectious and undeniably fun. —Donofthedeard (Snuffy Smiles)

PEYOTES, LOS: Cavernicola: CD

Their Myspace page says they're from Argentina, so I'm not sure why the CD says "Garage-A-Go-Go-Tex-Mex," but it doesn't really change the fact that what they're dishin' out is loud, fuzzed '60s garage slop, right down to two Sonics covers. I've definitely heard better, but they ain't all that bad on the whole, and I liked the fact they sound like they're totally into what they're doing. —Jimmy Alvarado (No Fun)

PIST, THE:
Input Equals Output, Album Two: LP
Formerly best known ((to me)) for being on the early '90s "Punk USA" comp and thusly having their name spelled with an exclamation point in lieu of the letter "I", The Pist were a troop of above-average mosh-pit maulers from the East Coast who were good enough to sound like they might have legitimately sprung from the Great Street Punk

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Uterus in 1983 or '84 or something, yet not transcendent enough that they cause me to wax particularly nostalgic for the musical emissions of that era. I mean, it's not like the chord progressions, attitudes and sentiments expressed in this odds-and-ends collection are likely something you've never heard before; but, then again, it's generally a given with fans and practitioners of this kinda music ((what do you even call this stuff anymore? "Hardcore?" "Street Punk?" "Punk/Hardcore?" "Moo Goo Gai Pan?")) that whether or not you've heard it all before is not a particularly valued criterion ((in an embarrassing case of mistaken identity, i really thought i *had* heard "Creature in My Closet" before, and that it was a Freeze cover)). The longer this record played, the longer it reminded me of... well... pretty much EVERYTHING else along these lines, which is when it hit me: StreetPunk QuadDecameter™. That's right, i said it and i meant it: *StreetPunk QuadDecameter™*! The reason bands of this ilk tend to sound similar is due to an unusual propensity for fourteen-syllable lines. STREETPUNK QUADDECAMETER™ I TELL YOU!!! Bear witness: "Small town lives, small town lies, you don't fit in their small town minds", "Shadows dance across my walls as I strain my eyes to see", "It lurks inside of everyone though most may hide it well", "You struggle just to make it but there are no guarantees", "You gave your mind and body; no, you put it up for sale", "We set our limitations, we can break them just the same", "No idols to be worshipped, no commandments

command me"—come ON, man, i cracked the code of the punk/hardcore molecule!!! *Coming up next on PBS: "Iambic Pentameter: Is it Rad?"* BEST SONG: "Bubblegum Bullshit," although i love bubblegum BEST SONG TITLE: "Bubblegum Bullshit" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This is the first record i've ever owned that was a single album with a side C and a side D. —Rev. Nørb (Havoc)

PLEXI 3: *Timebox: 7"*

Peppy, happy guy/girl vocals but not girly, not emo: pretty straight rockin'. It's pop punk that's radio friendly, and it feels fun, but this record is kind of reserved, no explosions. I like my pop faster and more harmonic, but really interested in what the band does next. —Speedway Randy (Full Breach Kicks)

POISON IVVY, THE: *Out for a Kill: CD*

The fourth LP from this Swiss trio with an across-the-ages sound similar to the U.K.'s Four Letter Word, GBH, and Guitar Gangsters. Well-coordinated, bottom-heavy rhythm section, metal guitar, and raspy, shouted choral vocals move at a decent clip. Catchy and sing-along at times; repetitive at others. Early in their fifteen-plus year career, they oddly added a second V in ivvy. —Jessica T (Colibri/Crazy Love, colibri-records.ch, crazyloverrecords.de)

P.O.S.: *Never Better: CD*

I have always had a soft spot for the Twin Cities music scene. To me, one of the most endearing defining features

of the last decade of Minnesota's DIY music community is the unprecedented synergy between the punk rock and hip hop musicians and fans in that metro area. Unlike many other cities, no one bats an eye when Dillinger Four and Atmosphere play shows together. No single figure in the Twin Cities scene is a finer bridge between the two musical subcultures than P.O.S. *Never Better* is P.O.S.'s third album and it is a strong, if fairly similar, follow-up to 2006's *Audition* album, which raised his musical profile and introduced P.O.S. to multitudes of new fans. There are a couple radio-friendly, head-bobbing funk tracks like "Low Light Low Life" and "Goodbye" that are quite successful. However, the majority of the album is more challenging and discordant, borrowing an air of tension clearly influenced by hardcore punk and an experimental edge typical of the envelope-pushing hip hop artists on Anticon Records. For the most part it works quite well, although some editing or refinement could have been applied to the last one third of the fifteen-song release, as it begins to sag towards the end. Overall, though, it's a very exciting release by a young and upcoming musical artist doing the Midwest proud. —Jake Shut (Rhymesayers)

PRETTY WHORES: *Teens of USA: CD*

Admittedly, upon looking at this and seeing the name, I assumed I'd hate it (judging from the name and packaging, figuring it was some Warped Tour "I hate my girlfriend, ergo all girls" emo/punk

pop). But after listening to it, it kind of sounds like a pop punk band trying to sound like The Hives. It's not bad, though if they tried to sound like Henry Fiat's Open Sore, *then* they'd really be on to something. —Joe Evans III (Self-released, myspace.com/prettywhores)

PROTESTANT: *Antagonist: 7"*

Beautiful and scorching three-song EP here. It's got all the requisite elements: stunning chipboard/silkscreen packaging (complete with booklet), top-notch, thematic graphics, bleak as hell lyrics (but with song/band explanations that are tinged with hope) and some of the meanest, darkest epic-style hardcore since that jaw-dropping Fighting Dogs LP came out a few years ago. Think Havoc-era From Ashes Rise and you're off to a pretty good start. When it's done well (and Protestant most definitely do it well), this shit makes me want to punch walls with a shit-eating smile on my face. If you're looking for dark and brooding hardcore, *Antagonist* is your golden ticket. —Keith Rosson (Halo Of Flies)

PROZACS, THE:

Playing the Chords We Love: CD

Pretty straightforward, by-the-books pop punk for the most part. Some of the songs sounded like The Unlovable for dudes. I probably would have really dug this in high school, and I swear that's not meant as an insult. —Sarah Shay (Cheapskate)

QUINTRON: *Too Thirsty 4 Love: CD*

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Records and Goner Records, it is one grooving slab of organ-drenched New Orleans swamp boogie. Ms. Pussycat and Mr. Quintrone split deranged vocal duties like partners in a debauched black disco church choir backed by a sinister, sexy drum machine. I can't say much more than go out and purchase this record as soon as your next paycheck arrives. —Josh Benke (Goner/Rhinestone)

RAMPANT BAND: Breakthrough/Breakdown: CD

Pretty standard alternative radio rock. It's not that bad, but most of the songs are so long (there's only one under three minutes, one over eight) that I had trouble paying attention after a little bit. Don't get me wrong, it's not that I demand everything be *all* short, but if you're going to go this route, take the Superchunk route and have really strong, catchy riffs that you play the hell out of. —Joe Evans III (Self-released, myspace.com/431038819)

REMISSION: Absolute Power: 7"

Holy shit! It's a new Remission record. Remission was the first hardcore band I ever saw play. Seeing them was pretty crucial to my entry into the punk scene. I stumbled onto the show by accident. Walking to school one day, I saw a Xeroxed flyer on the side of a building. With the Wisconsin snow coming down on me, I stared at that flyer. I stared at it for a long time, stunned at what I had found. Up until that point, my exposure to live music had been

limited to whatever was happening at the university. Sure, Superchunk and Alligator Gun were fine, but I listened to the Misfits and the Dead Kennedys. I read *MRR*. The thought had never crossed my mind that there were legit punk shows happening in Eau Claire. Not until I saw that flyer. That flyer blew my mind. A week or so later, when the date of the show rolled around, Remission blew my mind even more. Now here I am, thirteen years later, still listening to hardcore. Remission still blow my mind. —MP Johnson (Profane Existence)

REPORTS: Bill Wyman Metal Detector: 7"

Reports bring that kickass jangly power pop sound that I really dig. The first song on the disk is a bit more post-punk and chilly, but they loosen up on the second song. Either way, I really enjoyed both tracks and could recommend this to any fans of Big Dipper or even the Wedding Present. Their record label even has a bunch of other cool-sounding bands that I've never heard of. Worth checking out. —Evan Katz (Ride The Snake, ridethesnakerecords.com)

RETICENTS, THE: EP I and EP II: CD

Loud hardcore stuff that has enough of a "meathead" feel to give it some anthemic heft, but with a bit more intelligence mixed in to keep them from sounds like, well, meatheads. Not bad at all. —Jimmy Alvarado (Zodiac Killer)

REVILERS: Isolation: 7"

A really nice record from the four-piece punk rock band out of Boston: sharp guitars, edgy vocals, bombastic beats. "Isolation" begins with an intro sample that's really funny and "On the Outside" closes out the record with a tune that's mournful and melodic. The first side's got a little SoCal sass but the flipside is very English. Highly recommended.

—Jim Ruland (Patac, myspace.com/patacrecord)

RIPPERS, THE: Why Should I Care About You?: CD

Dunno if this is the same band I reviewed for *Flipside* way back when, but if it is, it seems they've given up seeking stardom in the '77 punk camp and have instead opted to go for something that occasionally sounds like a punked-up early Yardbirds. An admittedly weak description, I know, and one based on the lack of fuzz in the guitars, but that's what comes to mind, and it's not exactly a bad thing. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS, THE: Underneath the Owl: CD

This is a new release that I felt equally intense emotions of fear and excitement about. Excitement because the Riverboat Gamblers are without a doubt one of my favorite bands of the last decade, and fear because I don't know if they can match the near perfection of their previous two records. The preview single released by the label, "A Choppy Yet Sincere

Apology," was utterly dreadful in a radio friendly manner. Turns out that song is the low point of the album in a Smashmouth-esque kind of way, which is baffling why they chose that song for the fans to have as the first impression off the new album. *Underneath the Owl* starts on a strong note with guest vocals from Todd C. of URT/Toys That Kill/F.Y.P./Recess Records for a fun, sloppy little number entitled "Disssississississississ." Other standout tracks include "Pilgrims in an Unholy Land," which starts with a reggae-influenced instrumental before getting to an anthemic punk rock chorus, and "Robots May Break Your Heart," which successfully shakes things up with vibraphone front and center, played by none other than L.A. punk legend D.J. Bonebrake. The vibe of the new record is closer to the introspective tendencies of 2006's *To the Confusion of Our Enemies* more than the all-out rock of 2003's *Something to Crow About*, although not quite as successful as the previous two outings. However, there's still plenty good to not rate this record as a disappointment. I look forward to seeing the new songs given room to breathe in a live environment. Knowing the Riverboat Gamblers, they will tour solid for the next year or two to support the album, so I'll have ample opportunities. —Jake Shut (Volcom)

ROGER MORTIS: The Cadieux Demo: CD-R

'80s hardcore (I hear some MDC in there) meets post-hardcore dance punk (a weird way of saying catchy indie

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rock). If they were to ever put out a LP, odds are it would be good. But odds were also good that Johnny Rotten would be dead by now, so who knows? —Bryan Static (Self-released, myspace.com/mortisroger)

ROTTEN, THE: *Enemy of the State*: CD

This is everything I should like in a punk band: repeated choruses sung with a snotty voice, power chords, and a band named after decay, but something's not right here. The production is extremely pristine. They've got the typical ode to hating everything with the song "No Good At All," but something about the calculated list of cops, politicians, and hippies just makes the tune typical. By the end of listening to this CD, I'm still left deciding if it's good or not while no guitar hooks or vocal hooks are left stuck in my head. —N.L. Dewart (Rebel Time)

ROXY EPOXY & THE REBOUND:

***Band-Aids on Bullet Holes*: CD**

1) I love the Epoxies; 2) I have no idea what happened to the Epoxies; 3) This sounds more or less like it could be the third Epoxies album, so, y'know, whatever. I mean, i suppose that the Epoxies sported a more 1979-81 type of new wavery, and this is more of a 1981-84 vertical slice—i.e., more Adam Ant than Adam & The Ants ((although that's a pretty poor point of reference)), or more MTV than *Fridays*—but, other than that, it's still Roxy's voice, taut and well-separated guitar / bass / drums, and synths which make deep, cerebral farting sounds, so i can't say as i have a

wellspring of complaints on the matter. The opening track, "Walls," does have a sort of "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves"-ish 2/4 beat to it ((under all the deep and cerebral synth farts and what-not)), which seems like some manner of subliminal Cher-channeling to me—but, i mean, you'd imagine that if the Epoxies had lived long enough to emit a third album, they would have expended most of their leftover punkarooni anyway, and be more Radio Hit than Nerd Orgy at this point, so what's the diff? Only thing i find troubling about this record is the absence of one or more "Need More Time" type smasheronois... which, i suppose, could be fairly troubling to investors. I'll review my portfolio immediately. **BEST SONG:** "New Way" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "This Twist" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** I don't really care for the graphics, and i actively dislike the typography. —Rev. Nørb (Metropolis)

RUNNAMUCKS: *Clawing Back*: LP

This band has been kicking around for years now, touring and putting out records. They work hard but they tend to get overlooked, which is mega unfortunate. Hopefully, this record will change that. All of the songs are distinct, incorporating different textures, while still falling within the boundaries of hardcore. Those boundaries are tested, but not, ummm, Fucked Up. The musicianship is top notch. If you want to hear an example of a modern hardcore band that knows what to do with a guitar, you'll find

it on this slab of wax. Quick, bright, and brilliant solos are sprinkled throughout. The one at the tail end of "Never be Mine" is a standout. They also bring in a piano, adding some simple key thumping over "Goodbye Sweet Nothing." The best part is that it all still sounds raw. It still cuts. —MP Johnson (Six Weeks)

SACRED SHOCK:

***You're Not with Us*: LP**

A lot of the time when I go to a hardcore show or a metal show, afterwards I walk away talking about how blown away I am by how tight, fast, and intense the bands were. My girlfriend usually then will ask if I want to go buy the band's record and almost always I find myself saying "Oh, no. I would never listen to that at home." That's the feeling I get with this record. These dudes probably slay live. The band is supremely solid, plays with epic ferocity, precision, and speed. But, at the same time, you won't ever catch me pitting in my room to this. For a quick description, imagine if the Husker Dü that recorded *Land Speed Record* got angrier, louder, and faster over time, maybe dabbled in metal crossover territory, rather than going on to record *New Day Rising* or *Flip Your Wig*. As a matter of personal preference, I enjoy the latter more so than the former, which isn't to say that there aren't folks out there who wouldn't enjoy this record. I'm sure some of you are certainly going to salivate all over this, and I might even join you at the shows. This just isn't going to get a lot

of plays on my turntable. —Jeff Proctor (Residue, residue-records.com)

SCREAMING FEMALES:

***Power Move*: CD**

Blistering, howling, incapacitating, surreal music that draws heavily from Jefferson Airplane, Black Sabbath, Bikini Kill, and Sonic Youth. While trying not to trample the term weird punk further into the ground; I classify Screaming Females with modern day oddity bands that are all fucking rad at what they do: Shellshag, anything with John Geek, Hunchback, Stupid Party, Eddy Current Suppression Ring, and any other group around that's using more than three effects pedals and not annoying the fuck outta me. Pick up this album and let Screaming Females lead you into the deepest caverns of your psyche. It's a trip worth traveling. —Daryl (Don Giovanni)

SETH DREW: *The Road Back Home*: CD

Seth was the lead singer of SuperChinchillaRescueMission, a favorite band of mine when they were around. After the band's break up, Seth moved from Louisiana to L.A., sobered up, and put an incredible amount of time and energy into becoming a union electrician. He was also a *Razorcake* columnist for awhile; his stories were all forthright, full of real detail, and sympathetic. Seth then relocated up to Portland, Oregon where he still lives. Knowing all of this about Seth, it would be a big mistake to make the assumption that the reason that he recorded a solo



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acoustic record was because other punk notables—like Tim Barry of Avail and Chuck Regan of Hot Water Music—had done the same. I've always had a high regard for Seth. His creative work is poetic, stark, and un-aggrandizing, even though his work deals largely with lives lived hard and restless. I'll be honest; ten years ago, I wouldn't have given this quiet, burning-ember music much thought. But with the time passed and bands like Whiskey & Co. and The Evens using quiet music not for sleepiness but introspection and looking at the more subtle hardships and softer beauties in life, *The Road Back Home* is an honest testament to life and music. Funnily—because I'm writing this in L.A. and days like this don't happen often—it's raining outside, a soft patter, and it sounds almost like Seth's playing in the front room. And that sounds like the perfect accompaniment to today. —Todd (Self-released, sethdrew32@hotmail.com)

SEXY: *Por Vida*: LP

Musical regrets are a dime a dozen. But, I think this one hits many DIY punk folks more acutely. *Por Vida* was initially released on Onion Flavored in 2002/2003 in a pressing of five hundred. Poof. Gone. No re-press. And although the CD version remained (remains?) available for quite some time, I'm with you on this. The CD isn't the same as the LP, especially with a band like Sexy that seems at home being played on shitty stereos with milk crates of records by the side. Christians can

have their Easter Bunny, Buddhists can Big Wheel into the next life on their reincarnation wheels, and I'll put my chips in with the importance of keeping great music (especially records) in print, long after other bands from 2002 are understandably buried and forgotten. It's because this shit makes me feel happy and alive and good and human. Sexy's great. Sexy's dead. Long live Sexy. —Todd (Thrillhouse)

SHELLSHAG / THIS BIKE IS A PIPEBOMB: Split: 7" EP

Shellshag: Jesus, this is going to sound corny, but Shellshag's songs sound like a handmade card made just for you on a special occasion. I understand that the record that's spinning wasn't made just for me, but their three songs are just so warm, personal, and direct. The nutshell is that it's arty, noisy rock but not mechanical, pretentious, or privileged. Think Hickey, not a party where people look at one another's asses, eyeballing for labels in envy and/or judgment. This Bike Is A Pipebomb: This is coming from a guy who, for the past eight years, alternates between two identical cut off pairs of grey shorts—there's a comforting expectation with TBIAP. Within acceptable parameters, one knows what to expect from them—no techno, no made-for-ringtone songs, just fiery, catchy, stripped-down rock and folk, delivered, well, like folks who've been doing it awesomely well for years and years. Two originals and a Shellshag cover. Sing-a-long fun times. —Todd (Starcleaner / Plan-It-X South)

SHIT GETS SMASHED:

Smash This Shit: 7"

The Battalion Of Saints meets Sin 34 came to mind when I dropped the needle and sat through the first side. Something about how the vocals are delivered and the guitar riffs are played. The vocalist here is female and the way she sounds reminded me how Julie from Sin 34 sang. This band bleeds early '80s punk rock, from their raw, almost home-studio-recorded sound to their three chord punk rock basics. If this band stays together past the two year break-up mark, I would like to see what they develop into. —Donofthedeat (Shit Gets Smashed)

SHITTY LIMITS, THE: *Espionage: 7" EP*

Total mongo rock in the vein on Henry Fiat's Open Sore and Dean Dirg, but they sound British instead of Scandinavian or German: obscured identities, bad teeth, bad breath, kidnapping scenarios, hammers and knives instead of guns, and band-as-gang affiliations. Tightly wound paranoia rock played pitch perfect. Nice. —Todd (Sorry State)

SKULLCRANES, THE:

Columbia Heights Nights: CD

Humorcore punkers, The Skullcranes, barrel out of the starting gate. With galloping garage punk rhythms and solid beats, the album revolves around beer, being broke, and smoking herb. "Douche" throws in a banjo as a comical oddity to bridge verses, but "Jessica Lange," who they have an

unexplainable crush on, is my favorite track, hands down. Funny stuff for those who like to laugh while they're circling the pit. Recommended. —Kristen K. (Crustacean)

SO COW: Self-titled: LP

So Cow is a one-man lo-fi indie pop act from Ireland. This record was recorded over the course of three years and is more a collection than an album. The variety of sounds—including Casios and weird noises, along with the tape hiss and varying fidelities on different songs—keep things from getting samey. The songs are smartly written and lyrical, with a bit of an Elvis Costello flair. I'll definitely play this a few more times. It's a breath of fresh air for people who have been known to take sweaters and tea over hoodies and coffee, but still think that some of the current twee revival bands are too tight-butt and affected. —CT Terry (Tic Tac Totally)

SOFY MAJOR: Self-titled: 12" EP

...i've always viewed Metal as something akin to jenkem, minus the purported high. N.A. Jenkem, if you will. However, on certain rare occasions, the Gods Of Metal part the black clouds of the Inverted Hades Atmospheric System, and i—very briefly—get a whiff of something i would imagine is roughly akin to a jenkem buzz. I mean, it still *smells* like shit, but at least you're *feeling* something, somewhere, you think. In any event, as this grooves-on-the-one-side-silkscreening-on-the-other platter began its initial revolutions, i thought



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perhaps such a time was upon me, as the intro guitars were grinding together in a mildly arresting manner, and i thought perhaps i heard the alluring whine of a distant drag race in the background. Unfortunately, it turned out to be just a bunch of weird moaning, with the singer, who probably has a half-decent voice under normal circumstances, straining his voice idiotically in some attempt to manufacture a functional screech. Bah. *Death to false jenkem!* BEST SONG: "Meutrea Lezoux" BEST SONG TITLE: The whippersnapper in me wants to say "Satan," but my left brain tells me i must admit it's "Need a Spank?" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Gatefold notes indicate that "THIS IS DIYED SOUND. BURN IT." Don't mind if i do. —Rev. Nørb (Emergence)

SONIC'S RENDEZVOUS BAND: *Live, Masonic Auditorium: CD*

As a devout teenaged *Creem* reader circa 1979-1981, i knew who Sonic's ((also spelled "Sonics")) Rendezvous Band were ((Fred "Sonic" Smith of the MC5 and Scott Asheton of the Stooges, among others)), but i can't say as i ever *heard* 'em—part of this may be due to the fact that they only released one single ((and THAT with the same song on the A-side and B-side, spuriously demarcated as "STEREO" and "MONO" even though no actual difference apparently existed)); another part of this equation might have been that in 1979, there was no FUCKING way i was going to listen to a group called "Sonic's Rendezvous Band," simply due to the fact that their

name clearly indicated that they were part of That Which Was, and not part of That Which Is Surely Overturning That Which Was ((in other words, had they been named "The Pukes" or "The Burps," i probably would have been all over 'em)). Rightly or wrongly ((and it's lookin' like "wrongly")), i ignored the band ever since...which was, if this mastered-off-a-C-90 seven-song live set is any indication, a moderately embarrassing error on my part. Now, granted, song lengths run a little long for punk-damaged attention spans ((3:31 on the low end to 7:18 on the high end, with a median length of 4:57)), and maybe these guys didn't fully hate Led Zeppelin, but at least they knew the difference between good Zep ((e.g., "Communication Breakdown")) from bad ((e.g., anything where Robert Plant sounds like a warbling brain-damaged lesbian folk singer...which is, one supposes, practically everything that isn't "Communication Breakdown")), and mostly they just sound like what the Saints might have sounded like were they from Detroit and not Australia and Ed Kuepper poisoned Chris Bailey's Ho-Ho's® and replaced him with a particularly nimble barbarian, crossed with a ten-years-more-modern version of the MC5. This is the type of thing that really makes the listener appreciate speaker cones. *Rock 'em back, Sonic!* BEST SONG: "Electroponic Tonic" BEST SONG TITLE: Curiously, it's also "Electroponic Tonic." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Recorded January 14th, 1978, while opening for

the Ramones, on the same day the Sex Pistols played their last show. Liner notes claim that this is clearly some manner of "torch passing"—if so, it marks the first time that said metaphorical torch has actually been passed backwards. Be this as it may, i'm inclined to believe that the Detroit Derby Girls hold their bouts somewhere in this same building. —Rev. Nørb (Alive)

SONS OF TONATIUH: *Chain up the Masses/Oracle: 7"*

I'm not an expert on the style of music this band plays, but I have seen a few bands that I can compare them to. For reference, I can hear the sounds of bands like Eyehategod, Sourvein, Weedeater, and 16. I'm guessing the genre that would fit them is doom. The lead track even draws hints of crust punk when things speed up for a bit. But what stands out is the downtuned, hard-hitting metal in the slow to barely mid-tempo speed. The vocal delivery is pained with shrieking screams. Guitar riffs have the sound of Black Sabbath on their best day. A bass guitar drones and plods along, keeping the mood low and the pace consistent. Drums are pounded out with sheer fury. I would not want to be reincarnated as a drum head for this band. —Donofthead (Sons Of Tonatiuh)

SPACE CRETINS: *Direct from the Superfreak Highway: CD*

...i actually totally do understand why some musical outfits attempt to present themselves as glammy, punky, intergalactic Rock Savior™ types,

regardless of the health/cred risks involved with such a caper: It's usually a sure sign that the parties involved have become BORED OFF THEIR ASS with the sonic and aesthetic drabness of their surroundings, and are attempting, with one mighty strum, to wash the bleach away and erect ((giggity)) temples of color and sex and neon and shiny silver stuff and monster movies and action figures and Japanese consumer products that use a lot of magenta in the packaging and Mud videos and "Rock & Roll Part. 2" and the like—all of which, of course, i find to be reasonably well-intentioned. *IT'S GOING TO BE A NEW ERA OF JET BOOTS AND RAD HAIR AND OUTDATED LOOKING LASER PISTOLS, I TELL YOU!* However, aligning oneself with said quantities and actually recasting Planet Earth in your ((real or imagined)) image are two different things, and, although i bear the band no particular malice, it is my considered opinion that the War On Yuck™ is a photon torpedo battle, and the Space Cretins have showed up armed with a taser. I mean, the music is played competently and recorded well, but the album sounds, at best, like Paul Stanley or someone singing over some of the less-exciting songs off the first side of "Road to Ruin." Or maybe it sounds kinda like some band on Epitaph ((is Epitaph even around any more?)) who stumbled across a Sigue Sigue Sputnik album, or if the Zeroes with the purple hair and the Action Swingers got Vulcan mind-melded ((which might be cool)) but then got left out at room temperature for



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too long until most of the interesting bits melted away. The band's one real stab at glam (a la the Lee Harvey Oswald Band, essentially the touchstone of the last thirty years of the genre), "Straight to the Edge," kinda fizzles simply because Paul Ace Diamond Blow's pipes simply aren't interesting enough to carry the load a la Bowie/Butler/Fenderblast ((though he tries admirably)). In any event, there is a game design postulate espoused by Sid Meier ((the guy who did the game *Civilization*)) that states that if any element of the game design isn't working, you should either double it or cut it by half—that is to say, either CRANK IT or bury it. "Direct from the Superfreak Highway" is a nice try, but these guys had best commence ta crankin' and buryin' if they want to give this reality the Technicolor™ throttling it so richly deserves. **BEST SONG:** "Rocket Roll" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Rockets On" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The album packaging uses the font Dirty Headline, which I once used in a video game. —Rev. Nørð (Killing Pig)

STRAWMEN: *Jack Rabbit 7"*

If you can dig this, the beginning of the first song ("Jack Rabbit") on this record sounded to me like an alt-country/country-punk version of Motörhead's "Ace of Spades." Interesting! From there, it quickly moved on to some kind of Starvations/New Bomb Turks hybrid, although, if you listen closely, you can hear that underlying "Ace of Spades" guitar riff throughout. It's a pretty

good song. The next one up, "Sour and Vicious Man" is great, I really loved it. The vocals are excellent and reminded me even more of the Starvations than the first song. There was an added harmonica, the pace was slow, and the tone was kind of blackly ominous à la Munly And The Lee Lewis Harlots. Upon closer inspection of the insert, I learned that it's a cover of a Greg Cartwright song (explains why I liked it so much), and I actually have it (it's on the Compulsive Gamblers' live LP), so I was a little surprised that I didn't recognize it straight off (I love that Gamblers record!). I'll have to listen to it again. The Strawmen's third song, "Red Barn," features some fast acoustic guitar strumming and is also pretty good. The artwork on the cover of the record is really nice, despite the fact that the rabbit therein has seen better days. In all, it didn't blow me away but it's a solid effort and I'd be interested to hear more from these three Canadians. —Jennifer Federico (Foul & Fair)

SURPRISE SEX ATTACK: ...A Romantic Interlude: CD

This album is straight ahead sloppy hardcore. These Aussies mix varying influences into their punk from metal a la "Violent Youth" and "Cunt Metal" to ska with "Up to Loose." The track "Jihad Baby" includes Middle Eastern chanting for the intro. This is a decent album with my only complaint being the tracks falling off the beat a little too much for my taste because it prevents their tunes from hitting as hard as they

potentially could. —N.L. Dewart (Live Fast Die Drunk)

SW!MS, THE: *Itemlord: CD*

Song craft, fuzzed-out guitar tones, and adventurous instrumentation gives this music all the muscle of a great album. But The Sw!ms' strengths are also its weaknesses. It's like how a triceratops' horns may have over evolved, making them too big for the dinosaur's head. Well, in The Sw!ms' case, it's more like their court jester hat got too big. So big, in fact, that it cloaks them in renaissance faire-style clothes. From the album's first track, "All Is Nice," there is the exotic sound of a tin flute playing classical melody. And even the CD package plays the part with its psychedelic acid rock throwback cover art of bright shades of green, yellow, purple, and blue. It's got the band members sitting in cartoon thrones with penciled-in, colorful garb holding various staffs. The album is laced with high-pitched Moogs and fuzzed-out instruments touching on '60s pop and psychedelic influences. Think Captain Beefheart without the beef. These songs pack no bite, rendering a PG rating that would have hippie parents salivating at the chance to start a drum circle with their freshly patchouli-ed toddlers as *Itemlord* blasts in the background. Sw!ms have got the art of pop song writing down and a niche, to boot, but, for most people, the renaissance faire *might* be a once in a year extravagance. —N.L. Dewart (Wall Ride)

TENEMENT / FRIENDLY FIRE: *Split 7"*

Tenement's single song doesn't reflect the other material I've heard from them. It's less bar rock guitar licks and economic Midwestern harmonies. Instead it sounds slowed down, thought-out, and great. The guitar licks are still there. But the neon signs are gone, and it's too honest and genuine to even get upset about there being only one song on the side of the split. Friendly Fire lay down two tracks that spill the wine of emotive Dischord hardcore and Chicago punk. If you see these bands' records, buy them. —Daryl (Forcefield)

TENEMENT / FRIENDLY FIRE: *Split 7"*

Tenement: Let's hear it for some bands that chose punk, as in, "Dude, you're way too talented. Are you going to waste it in a shitty punk band? You could be the next Johnny Cougar (or modern day equivalent that I happily remain ignorant of)." I'm just glad to have Tenement on the DIY punk team, much like the dearly departed Carrie Nations and the dearly here The Bananas. At the core is fuckin' awesome songwriting, but it works even better when played at higher voltage and with plenty of amperage. Tenement is a go. Friendly Fire: Really like Dag Nasty and Hot Water Music. The good news is they picked up on *Wig Out at Denko's* and *Fuel for the Hate Game* and not *Field Day* and *The New What's Next*. So, it's almost-breathless, ultra-posi, clean-and-tight East Coast punk rock with some extra atmosphere that's easy to sing along to. Not bad. —Todd (Forcefield, forcefieldrecords.org)



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"I can't do this justice, cause it's all done tight as fuck too. One of the best things I've reviewed this year!" (Steve) RIPPING THRASH (UK)

"Starting as straight forward crust, this CD bounces back & forth with reggae/ska bits that create a unique combo. It's almost like a hostile ska-punk hybrid, with even the slow parts still sounding raw like a fresh picked scab!" (Dave) SLUG & LETTUCE # 88

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**THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY:
Raw Black Power: 7"**

Power doesn't have to be advertised. Yet it does your health and future good to be aware when a badass motherfucker has just walked into your immediate vicinity. TMIBH are that badass motherfucker. Wielding locomotion akin to Mick Collins of the Dirtbombs and the dynamite Midwestern punk of the Pagans, fused to end of a nun chuck in Bruce Lee's hands, it's part soul, part full-on brawl, and undeniably "go ahead and hit me in the face; it's the last thing you'll remember" powerful. It's an excellent two-songer with a Tim Kerr-drawn cover. —Todd (Insect)

THRASH OHOOI:

Blasting Your Silly Head: Cassette

Although the cover is fairly amusing, I wish I could say the same about the music. Or that it was even halfway decent. So devoid of an originality or variation, I would rather eat cow's brain than listen to this again. —Sean Koeppenick (Cactus)

THRASH OHOOII:

Blasting Your Silly Head: Cassette

This band explodes in a cacophony of drums but knows how to keep the thrash pounding right along without a self-defeating glitch. This is just hardcore done right. These guys have the call and response verse and choruses scream songcraft down. These were just thirteen good songs that went by too fast, but that's okay because the B-side of the tape repeats it all again.

—N.L. Dewart (Cactus / Revulsion, mspace.com/revulsionrecords)

THURNEMAN: Luggsliten Levnad: 7"

When I was informed that Svartenbrandt had broken up, I was pissed. I loved that band. Their songs went by in a flash and left a deep impression on me. Luckily, before they disbanded, they turned me onto another contemporary Swedish band that approached layered, hardcore punk with the same innovation and intensity: Thurneman. They're great. And of all the record labels in the world, one that resides no further than an hour away from my home put this out. You can see Thurneman shirts pretty frequently around Razorcake HQ, 'cause when they sent distro copies of the DMC Comp., they packaged them with test screens. This band slays hardcore punk with a dagger cut from very strong ore. —Daryl (Puke N Vomit)

TIM VERSION, THE:

Prohibition Starts Tomorrow: LP

Since this is a re-issue and I reviewed the CD format of this record prior, since I placed it on my 2003 top ten list, and since you can sift through roughly twenty pages of reviews of their entire catalog, interviews, and live reviews on razorcake.org (use the "search archives" function) if you want to read about my perpetual touchdown stance that I take with The Tim Version, let's talk about format. I started seriously getting into punk in the mid-'80s when the most pushed format was cassette. I lived in the desert. My cassettes experienced a

ninety-eight percent failure rate. Of the hundreds I played, only several dozen remain today (and many of those are warped or are tenuously spliced together with transparent tape). Then came CDs, a format I've always been ambivalent to. They're utilitarian when working (no getting up and flipping over the record) and driving around. But I give the format—not necessarily the music on them—as much thought as pieces of shiny scrap paper. Some of the first CDs I ever purchased are now starting to flake and fail. *Prohibition Starts Tomorrow*, when it was first released in 2003, never got the vinyl treatment. Now, I'm not one to say, "If it's not on vinyl, it doesn't exist in my musical world." But, as I write this, to my left and behind me are hundreds upon hundreds of vinyl records; organized, cared for, and regardless of their monetary value, cherished. Their legacy is as immediate as putting the needle down on the acetate and having the room fill up with music. And it's this legacy—one that can last over a hundred years—check out the Cylinder Preservation and Digitization site run by UC Santa Barbara for a working example—that I think that bands like The Tim Version are worthy of. So, fuck yeah, I'm stoked that *Prohibition's* on vinyl. Dudes deserve it and it's totally worth picking up, even if you have the CD already. —Todd (Attention Deficit Disorder)

TIMMY'S ORGANISM: Self-titled: 7"

Unique packaging here for a unique product: this self-titled EP contains five

songs on two 45s. Timmy's Organism is essentially one guy (Timmy Lampinen), putting tracks down on cheap recording devices like two of his potential influences—Jay Reatard and Alex Chilton. Some of the tracks sound like '76-style punk (think Adverts), others like mid-'60s garage rock. The more adventurous songs on the album are the slower, far gone tracks—which sound similar to the late-'60s eccentric stylings of the Chocolate Watch Band and the Head Shop. These records are great in the sense that it's weird without being self-consciously weird. —Ryan Leach (Sacred Bones, sacredbonesrecords.com)

UNKNOWN INSTRUCTIONS:

Funland: CD

Unknown Instructions is comprised of some heavy hitters: the rhythm section is Watt and Hurley (both of Minutemen and firehose); Joe Biazia (Saccharine Trust) plays guitar (and doubles as producer of *Funland*); and artist Raymond Pettibon, Dan McGuire, and the big guy from Pere Ubu switch off on vocals. *Funland* includes a cover of "Frownland," a track which originally appeared on Captain Beefheart's highly unorthodox *Trout Mask Replica*. The Beefheart selection is appropriate—it's really emblematic of how "out there" *Funland* is. And while the guitar playing and the rhythm section is nothing short of amazing (Watt and Hurley—enough said), occasional vocalist Dan McGuire's beatnik rap gets old quick. It's actually infuriating considering the levels Biazia, Watt, and

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Hurley take Unknown Instructions' music ("Those Were the Days" has a fucking instrument playing—it has to be Biaza's guitar—that sounds like John Cale's electric viola). Unknown Instructions really comes together on "Later that Night," a track combining the group with David Thomas on vocals. As much as I don't care to admit it, David Thomas is right up there with Beefheart as one of the most erudite and innovative vocalists of the rock'n'roll era. With the exception of Beefheart, there really seems to be no precedent for David Thomas—the man's voice doubles as an uncontrollable instrument; his ideas on "The Geography of Sound" would probably pique Henri Lefebvre's interest. Unfortunately, Thomas only appears on three tracks—one of which is only half realized ("Last Waltz"). Fans of Watt, Hurley, and David Thomas (at their most experimental) will find this album rewarding. Everyone else will want my fucking head for even mentioning this record. —Ryan Leach (Smog Veil, smogveil.com)

URBAN UNREST: On a String: 7"

This is a hardcore punk record with no trace of heavy metal. I think that paints an accurate picture. —Bryan Static (Rabbit's Foot)

VAGINASORE, JR:

This Here Peninsula: CD

Heartfelt tunes from Tampa Town. They hit you with a bunch of silly song

titles that—like the band name—dare you to dismiss them, and then come back with songs that are strangely earnest and sincere. "Nice Blinker, Asshole" ends with forty-five hilarious seconds of "No Fucking Way!" howled with the sound of fury and of someone who has endured ten thousand illegal lane changes. —Jim Ruland (ADD)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Drink Fight Fuck Vol. 3: CD

Like Epitaph has done with pop punk, the Zodiac seems intent on trying to corner a corner of the punk playing field. An abundance (well, thirty-two tracks anyway) of sleazy rock and psychobilly stuff can be found here, courtesy of a number of "name" and lesser known bands, including the Hip Priests, the Loaded Nuns, Flat Tires, the Bible Beaters, Blag Dahlia (who turns in a quasi-hillbilly ditty endearingly entitled "Bitch I Love You"), Eddie Spaghetti, Candy Snatchers, GG Elvis, Antiseen, and tons more. Can't say I was down with everything here, but it is surprisingly consistent and some of it is flat-out good, which is pretty much all one can ask for, I guess. —Jimmy Alvarado (Zodiac Killer)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Live Fast, Die Drunk: CD

Four Perth area punk bands here for your enjoyment. The Lungs: Meld Sick Pleasure with early DOA and set on "annihilate." Yeah, they're that good. Zxspecky: A bit more rock

in the mix, but "rock" in the same vein as some of the wilder, take-no-prisoners bands that were comin' out of Scandinavia earlier in the decade. New Husseins: What the fuck are they using for guitars, a chainsaw with a Harley motor attached? They sound fuckin' monstrous. Surprise Sex Attack: After a vaguely ska-like initial tune, they quickly ratchet things up to full-tilt thrash and bore wide holes through the ol' eardrums. Four bands, not a loser in the lot, and all of it adds up to one of the best regional punk comps I've heard in a while. —Jimmy Alvarado (Live Fast Die Drunk)

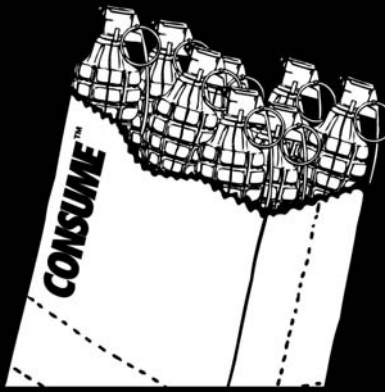
VARIOUS ARTISTS: No Idea Presents: #1 Reason to Move to Gainesville: LP

Since you're reading *Razorcake* or *Razorcake* online, you've probably already heard of this comp since it's on No Idea. If your mind is anything like mine, you probably saw this comp and thought that it was some label sampler disguised as a comp like there was a lot of in the '90s. Don't let your prejudices fool you. This is definitely not some b.s. Punkorama comp made simply to advertise albums for No Idea. I think that only one of these bands has a (deliberate) release on No Idea. This compilation has eleven bands from Gainesville doing one song each. The bands don't all sound the same and the sequencing of the record is good. Stand out tracks are by Averkiou, Hometeam (who contribute a track that has the same title as the comp), Nervous Dogs, and The Jammy

Dodgers. Bummer tracks are by two of the bands. Pretty all right tracks are by five of the bands. You get a lot of punk, a country track, a more melodic hardcore track, and a couple of really solid alternative tracks. I don't know if any of the tracks are exclusive to this comp, as I'm rather unfamiliar with all eleven bands on here. Even if none of 'em are, this comp is still worth checking out if you're in the same position of unfamiliarity as I am. You'll most likely find something you wanna hear more of. And that's the point of comps anyhow, right? —Vincent (No Idea)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: We Went and Recorded It Anyway: CD

Modestly subtitled "The Best of Pop-Punk and Power Pop 1977-84," the glory of this comp resides primarily in the fact that 1) it has been assembled with seemingly no rhyme nor reason—no geographic nor overly obvious aesthetic connections really exist between the bands, as far as i can tell; and 2) the biggest band on here is what, the Nervebreakers? Rudi? The Crap Detectors? The Automatics ((UK, not Portland))? Benedict Arnold & The Traitors? Twenty neat tracks of varying degrees of obscurity from an era that has thus far held up to seemingly infinite stripmining. It kinda reminds me of those Teen Beat CD-R's of a few years ago, except that 3) it's not a CD-R; 4) the bands aren't in alphabetical order; and 5) they used black AND red ink on the



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cover. I really enjoyed those "D.I.Y." CDs that Rhino® released fifteen or so years ago; the liner notes in the CD booklet kinda remind me of a low budget version thereof. Maybe we all need to hijack that particular radio and start making comp CDs for each other, mixtape style. *My gawd, i think i'm starting to feel the first pangs of CD nostalgia.* Needless to say, this review is over! **BEST SONG:** The Excerpts, "Will I Ever See You Again?" **BEST SONG TITLE:** Terminal Sunglasses, "Fear Of People Who Look Insane." **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Liner notes refer to the Nervebreakers as "the Ejectors." —Rev. Nörb (Brutarian Quarterly)

VEE DEE:

Public Mental Health System: CD

Man, I was definitely the wrong guy to review this. Thirteen songs and around seventy minutes long, it comes across as nothing more than the singer from Gas Huffer fronting a relentlessly long-winded stoner rock band. Hate to bag on this three-piece or their label, but I remember reviewing their first full-length *Further* back in 2004 and not being too captivated then, either. Five years later and it's crystal clear this band's slow, drawn-out wah-wah-laced jams are just not for me. —Keith Rosson (Criminal I.Q.)

WAR PIGS: Degeneration: CD

This has stayed in heavy rotation since I got it in the mail. It manages to get me pumped up, without making me

overexcited or anxious. The Black Sabbath inspiration isn't just in the name, Tony Iommi's riffs are clearly audible in a few songs. Yet, this album is nowhere near metal as we know it today; it's hardcore rife with tension and strength that only beautifully basic chords and perfect timing can deliver. My only complaint would be the two instrumental tracks which make this nine song album longer than it has to be. —Rene Navarro (Staggered Works Music, staggeredworks.org)

WARCRY: Maniacs on Pedestals: CD

This album is the fucking shit. This band's live performance is brutal; they're so intense the crowd surges forward to be closer, but is kept away by the ferocity of their movements. The lyrics are as clear and intense as the message they transmit. This album is about oppression and its resistance. The rhythm section is very tight while the guitar fuzzes and slashes away on its own. Holding the sonic assault down are vocals that seem to cry out from the darkest part of yourself, screaming what the world refuses to hear. —Rene Navarro (Feral Ward, feralward.com)

WITCH HUNT:

Burning Bridges to Nowhere: CD

Haven't listened to first two records in awhile now and it's been a few years since I've seen them live. Never did get around to burning them on to the computer to get them into the rotation of listening on the iPod, either. But I do have good recollection that I liked

them a lot. So I had no apprehension getting this little slab of plastic for review. Since this was on CD, I imported the music right away without a listen. Had that gut feeling that I was not going to be disappointed. After I downloaded the songs, it was time for a sample of what was in store. The first song, "Blind Eyes, Blind Lives," leads off the bunch with some hard-charged energy. But the second track, "Everyday," sparked my interest up to a new level. Right off the bat, I noticed the texturing and layers of the dual guitar mixture. Adding the male/female vocal delivery added another element of perfection. The dreariness of the mood of the song made this an instant favorite. This song alone shows the maturity and growth of this band. But it did not end there. The entire release is consistent and, surprisingly, I did not find one track that put me off. A combination of not having an overtly raw production, excellent song structures, and tight musicianship makes this an enjoyable listening experience. The music is ambitious and it shows why this band is heralded. —Donofthedeath (Alternative Tentacles)

YO MAN GO: LIFE LESSONS: 7"

Two rollicking, honest, emotional blasts of pop punk/hardcore crossover, akin to *Promise of an Uncertain Future*-era Digger and Watch It Burn, with bits of Avail chugga chugga and Hot Water Music whoa-oh's. In other words, it's great! One hundred pressed on grey

vinyl, one hundred on black. Screened covers with cutesy polar bears. Wish there was more than two songs here, because these songs are a lot of fun. —Jeff Proctor (Square Of Opposition)

YOUNG GOVERNOR:

"Virginia Creeper" b/w "I'm a Mess": 7"

Let's see a show of hands of folks who think The Tranzmitors and The Statues are pretty great. Now, imagine if their power pop propensities were roughed up a little bit, and not in a ProTools-\$1,000-a-day-studio-intentionally-fucked-up way, but a Jay Reatard *Bedroom Disasters*, sort of way, like this dude just can't help himself. It sounds like he's playing this shit by himself, standing on his futon in his dirty chones, singing to his cat. And that's said in the most positive of lights. He's just got to get the catchy jams out but only has this dinky little machine to capture these raw pustules of sweetness. (I don't know if "sugar zit" is a genre of music, but I'm™ ing it right now.) That's what I get from this 7". What makes sense, too, is that the Governor sang backup on the single version of Fucked Up's "Dance of Death" and is a primary member of Marvelous Darlings (and I'm highly recommending *The Swords*, *The Streets* 7"s, too right now). —Todd (Plastic Idol, plasticidol.com)

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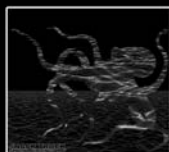
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“There is a positive,
sincere attitude to
the whole deal that
kept me smiling
throughout.”

—CT Terry

FUCK FIGHT FANZINE #4

ASK FIRST!, \$2, 5½" x 8½",
photocopied, 48 pgs.

Here's a well-intentioned primer on sexual assault by a woman who wrote it to cope with her sexual abuse. I've read a few zines on the same topic. This one covers the same ground and reflects the same opinions as other guides that I've read. It's very basic, meant to teach people who have yet to learn what phrases, like "consent" and "accountability," mean in a sexual assault context. There are sections in here defining consent and forms of abuse and suggestions for rape survivors, supporters of rape survivors, and the perpetrators. Maybe if you find yourself in one of those roles and are unsure about what options are available, this zine will give you some ideas. However, I feel compelled to point out that this guide and others like it come from a very specific viewpoint of rape survivors within anarchist communities and don't always take into account that other people's experiences with sexual assault will follow a different path from theirs. When a sexual assault occurs between people in a small, close-knit anarchist group, then it is possible that the survivor and supporters can confront the perpetrator and discuss an accountability process. However, this zine mentions nothing of how this would work for survivors that don't personally know the perpetrators. It especially ignores what to do about the vast majority of perpetrators that would refuse to follow this zine's instructions to sit silently while being confronted by the survivor and taking part in an accountability process. So, for the majority of survivors, for whom an accountability process would be impractical or impossible, the difficult question of how to take action against the perpetrator is ignored. There is not much discussion in this zine or any similar sexual assault-themed guides about filing a police report or finding another alternative to dealing with an uncooperative perpetrator. Like I said, this zine is well-intentioned, but I would really like to see a zine that tackles the difficult and confusing

decisions that lie ahead of a broader base of survivors. —Lauren Trout (neckmonster@gmail.com)

BITE THE CACTUS #3, \$1,

4¼" x 5", photocopied, 23 pgs.

Bite the Cactus is a charming collection of comics, mostly drawn by Adrian Chi. There's a childlike, innocent quality and openness to her little slices of life, that range from consternation over why people want to help her put her bike on the front of the bus so much, to why Los Angelenos freak out at rain but seem passive about ash falling from nearby, out-of-control wild fires, to loaning out a VCR tape that never returns. Below it is a sense of calm and wonder. A quick and playful read. —Todd (bitethecactus@gmail.com)

BLACK WATER FANZINE #1,

\$3, 8½" x 11", newsprint, 40 pgs.

I haven't been this excited about discovering a new zine since I first read *Razorcake*. It's got a very cool, old school layout, totally cut and paste. No high-tech bullshit. Keith, who plays drums in Warcry, makes this zine. I picked it up at their show in T.J. and stayed up all night reading it. When I woke up, it was clutched in my hands like a little treasure. It's loaded with great interviews with bands and artists, tour diaries, reviews, and some really great stories. It took Keith three years to make this, and it really shows, because this zine is aesthetically beautiful—without a dull moment—and great to read more than once. This zine provides a window into the lives of punks from around the world, which makes us feel a sort of solidarity with each other, regardless of the miles and differences between. From Portland to Japan to Tijuana, we all hate our jobs, loathe the system, and love punk so much that it becomes our lives. —Rene Navarro (PO Box 5223, Portland, OR 97208-5223)

BLURT! #6, \$2, 4½" x 5½",

photocopied, 64 pgs.

I've been reading Lew's writing for five years now in his old music

zine, *Vinyl A Go-Go*, and through the run of *Blurt!* One thing I've always appreciated is Lew's compulsion to experiment with style. He's tinkered with syntax like a beat poet, dropped articles to put things in motion, and set story threads on collision courses to show their interrelated resonance. Has it been interesting and unique? You bet your balls. But, does it always work? No. And that brings us to this issue of *Blurt!* It appears that what Lew has done is type up and arrange bits of his journals, then integrate them with found writing like weird notes and discarded homework, creating this forgotten, gutter-urchin pastiche. In this issue, Lew is viewing his writing as part of this discarded world, and there is a lot of talk about disenfranchisement: from the people partying around him while he writes in his notebook, from the wine-drinking art professor in the new house across the street, and from his partners in hangover the next morning. Unfortunately, the longest, least elliptical piece is a juvenile rant about how homeless people are more in touch with the real world than office workers. The rest of the bits of writing touch on the signifiers of partying, but without the actual stories; he tells us about the cigarette burns in the rug, but we never really learn how they got there. Visually, this zine is full of stunning collages and photocopier art, but the writing never comes together as anything more than an unintentional warning against the party life. I will always welcome a new issue of *Blurt!* and was glad to see the speed trials taking place here, even if the results didn't quite make the clock. —CT Terry (Lewis Houston, 95 Clara St., Austin, TX 78702)

DIGITAL WORM #4, \$1 or trade,

8½" x 5½", copied, 32 pgs.

Seems like personal zines can be split into two categories. There are those that, while inherently personal, manage to convey universal themes or tap into some kind of bigger picture the reader can relate to—it's inclusive and all-encompassing. Then there's the kind that reads as nothing more than

a diary and seems wholly intended for the writer and his or her friends. Unfortunately, *Digital Worm* comes across as the latter. There's a lot of material about Ashleigh's friends at work or crushes she has on a guy, with virtually no back story or insight into their personalities or why they're doing what they do. It's as if we, the readers, are already supposed to *know* who these people are, and therefore should find their behavior shocking or Ashleigh's reactions perfectly understandable—I mean, after all, this is, you know, *Kevin*, we're talking about. Or, *Sarah*. Or, whoever-except we don't know who the hell Kevin or Sarah are. And the fact that the diary-esque entries are over two-and-a-half years old also seems a little strange. While I'm all for culling personal experiences and trying to see how they fit into a larger framework in the world, it seems like *Digital Worm* needs some more fine tuning before it reaches that point. —Keith Rosson (Ashleigh Addict, 200 Wichita Ln., Williamsburg, VA 23188)

EAR DAMAGE #23, \$2, 3¾" x 4½",
printed and stapled, 74 pgs.

Despite an unfocused and unconvincing opener on the similarities between punk and hip-hop, for which there is definitely a case to be made, this zine has some genuinely interesting (and not entirely porn-focused) content. An interview with Cheetah Chrome, guitarist for The Dead Boys and thusly legend, is the obvious centerpiece, along with lengthy interviews with the director of *Deep Throat*, an interview with alt-porn darling Baby Sinead, and a thick reviews section full of real under-the-radar shit. While the writing is roughshod and reaching, they are on their way, and all that interesting content definitely puts this zine ahead of so many others in the one area that zines usually lack most noticeably: interesting things between the covers. —Andrew Flanagan (PO Box 180323, Mobile, AL 36618-0323)

FAT GRRRLZ! #2, \$2 or trade,

5½" x 8½", photocopied, 20 pgs.

The title led me to believe that the tone

would be angry and that the words would mock skinny girls and blame advertisements for making fat girls feel insecure. I assumed there would be reprinting of articles and statistics from experts, generally making the authors behind the zine both the victims and the heroes, while everyone else is criticized for being sheep conforming to modern beauty standards. I might be a little jaded after just two years of zine reviewing. I've seen enough garbage in the review materials package every two months to assume I know the content of a zine based on the title and the cover. The truth is, this zine is totally different than what I expected and I absolutely loved it. A quote from an essay on changing the meaning of the word fat ought to give you the same idea: "Imagine if we took a word like 'fat' and turned it into something

and used record finds. There is a positive, sincere attitude to the whole deal that kept me smiling throughout. From the intro, "The wars, poverty, sadness, and injustice never end, yet neither does the music, and that's what keeps us going." Amen. —CT Terry (Rene Navarro, 727 E. San Ysidro Blvd. #654, San Diego, CA 92173)

GENEVA13 #7, free, 5½" x 8½", printed, 59 pgs. This is one good-looking, well-edited and well-written zine. And, locally focused too. What? Geneva, New York: You *actually* have an alternative. There are nicely done interviews with interesting (and musically diverse) people, a particularly great article on "punk astronomy" among other equally well-done pieces, and not-terrible poetry. They use the same

and unsure, cosmically fundamental reflection. —Andrew Flanagan (PO Box 35501, Richmond, VA 23235)

LIKES/DISLIKES #2, \$?, 4¼" x 11", copied, 16 pgs. Literally, a list of likes and dislikes in construction paper half-folded. From what I gathered, this lady really likes the part of the Venn diagram where "art" and "leftist politics" overlap. She also revels in productivity: "crossing off to do items," "getting organized," "getting stuff done" etc. I'm guessing Lacey Hedtke has some other zines that are more content, less catharsis, and worth a looksee. —Andrew Flanagan (polkaostreich@gmail.com)

MAP OF FOG, \$2 or trade, 5½" x 8½", photocopied, 28 pgs. Crazy things always seem to happen to

that we already finalized ten minutes ago." Well *that* fuckin' explained a lot from the past few years. —Joe Evans III (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146)

NERF JIHAD #8, \$?, 5½" x 8½", photocopied, ? pgs. This zine is an incredibly random assortment of articles and blurbs from a high schooler in Australia. There are some pictures, a few reviews, a series of correspondence between the author and a juice company rep, movie reviews of movies the author hadn't seen yet, a somewhat depressing comic and other odds and ends. The format and randomness of the content of this zine reminds me a lot of another zine I reviewed, *Urinal Gum*. I didn't like that one either. Is it too much to ask for some cohesion and interesting stories? —Kurt Morris

"I hereby encourage all of Ottawa to mosh wrong on principle alone."

—The Lord Kveldulfr
STANDARD ISSUE #5

positive like the definitions available for non-humans. 'I feel fat' wouldn't mean 'I feel unacceptable,' it could mean 'I feel like I have an abundance of desirable elements' or 'I feel like the best.'" Throughout, the author writes encouraging paragraphs like, "Do be yourself! Whether that means thin, fat, short, tall, jerky, nice, cool, boring, lazy, energetic, horny or whatever," and it gives you that same feeling you get from a giant monster hug or reading a children's book. The zine is just about loving yourself for who you are, and that's a message that everyone needs to be reminded of sometimes. —Lauren Trout (fatgrrlz@gmail.com)

FLUKE #7, \$1, 5½" x 8½", printed, 40 pgs. This zine looked really promising because the cover art was pretty cool and there was a Mike Watt interview. Unfortunately, the interview consists of pretty much the same questions Watt answers for every interview. There's a short story about going into Mexico, which is stupid and badly written. The writer interviews some guy who used to work at Gilman and roadie for Echonochrist, but is now quite happy in Iraq with the U.S. military. I couldn't believe I was seeing a guy holding a huge gun on top of a tank being revered in a zine. This zine is lame. Don't support people who support your enemy. —Rene Navarro (PO Box 41931, Tucson, AZ 85717)

FUCK FIGHT FANZINE #4, \$?, 5½" x 8½", photocopied, 28 pgs. A cut'n'paste music zine from San Diego. There are a bunch of short interviews, plus rants on motorcycles

typeface as *Punk Planet* used to, which instantly ingratiates them to me... is that superficial? Whatever. This zine is fucking quality. —Andrew Flanagan (PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14456)

GULLIBLE #29, \$?, 3¾" x 4½", copied, 42 pgs. Okay, first of all: a drawing of Tupac pissing on Dale Earnhardt's grave in that loopy-loosey-goosey-3rd-grade-spiral-notebook style you really can't help but like? That's kind of an instant win. But, the vast majority of the work in *Gullible* is the writing, and it is better than decent. Stories from childhood, stories from the teenage years, stories small and large and medium all done up in a confident style and a voice that's solid and very obviously earned through the process of putting out twenty-nine of these damn things. So many zines skate by on sheer honesty and car-crash can't-turn-aways. Not this one. —Andrew Flanagan (gulliblezine@gmail.com)

INTROVERT #6, \$1.50 or ppd., 3¾" x 4½", printed, 31 pgs. The avenue of abreaction that making art provides a person is a deep-seated compulsion that starts at loss and ends unanswered, a release where the best we can hope for is to get back to where we started. *Introvert* #6 is a case study in this. After losing a nephew to SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), Nicole recounts her experience, big and small, of her and her family's struggle to reign in the sharp and breath-stealing pain of unexpected loss. There are some clunky sentences and some stilted directions taken, but she carries it through with heavy honesty

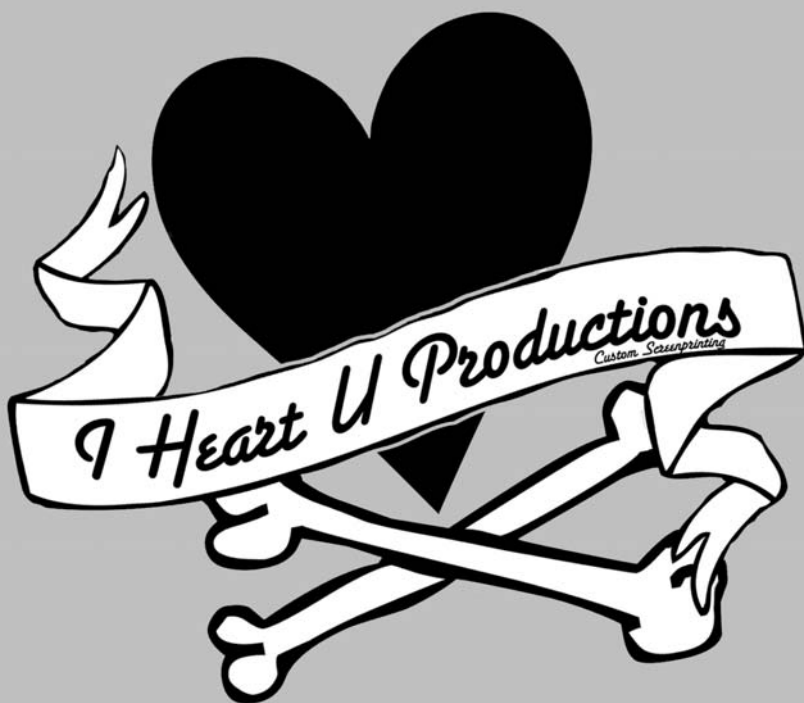
people in close proximity to Marcos. I suggest staying away from him! Someone jumped off the roof of his job, a man next to him on the train had a seizure, and his friend got knifed when the writer wasn't there. The stories are written with a degree of remove, sounding like friend-of-a-friend fare. A piece on shrooms was funny, but more in a "laughing at" than "laughing with" way—dude wrote while tripping, saying things like, "Writing notes to myself in Babylon, the confined world, messages in a bottle, to let him know he is free." —CT Terry (Marcos Soriano, PO Box 27252, SF, CA 94127)

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #312, \$4, U.S. and Canada, 8½" x 11" newsprint, ? pgs I walk into band practice, and say to my good pal/MRR columnist Bill Florio that I got this issue to review, and we were both kind of like "Why is *MRR* even sent out for review anymore? Or even any bigger zine?" I agree, at least with this case, because I think (as I've said before) any self-respecting person into punk is going to know what they're getting here (bunch of band/zine/label/etc. interviews, a retrospective, scene reports, tons of reviews, and columns ranging from "right on" to batshit crazy). Anyway, I recall this anecdote, because in this issue, Bill's particular column talks about his new office job, and a bunch of workplace jargon he made up, including "florioism: where I pretend to hear something else just to make a joke, or jump back to a previous topic to make a joke and then continue with that topic because upon making the joke I thought of something to add

(Matt Ford, PO Box 575, Gosford, NSW 2250, Australia)

PERPETRATION NATION, \$1 or trade, 5½" x 8½", photocopied, 28 pgs. *Perpetration Nation* is done by Nick, a thirty-ish-year-old punk living in Ohio. Nick is the type of guy who probably refers to himself as a grouchy old man, because he's too mature to have patience for the shenanigans and drama of the younger people in his scene. But he's still idealistic enough to be super excited to go on his first band tour, even though being on the tour stresses him out. In this issue, if you squint enough to read the teeny type, Nick takes a sober look back at his hard-partying days, tells some work stories, spins tales about the times he's been arrested, does an illustrated tour diary, and interviews bands and people he encountered while on the road. The entire zine is peppered with his funny drawings, which add a friendliness to even the bleakest material. Like DIY punk does at its best, *Perpetration Nation* shows the intrinsic link between the musical and the personal. —CT Terry (Nick Anderson, 1582 Wayne Ave. Apt. 4, Dayton, OH 45410)

RISE AND THE FALL OF THE HARBOR AREA, THE #13, Free in L.A., 5½" x 8½", offset, 40 pgs. Many collaborative zines would do well to read and study *TRATFOTHA*. It's both the sum of contributors and the skill of its editor. Many bases are covered in issue #13—interviews with Shepard Fairey and Todd Congelliere of Recess Records, music and restaurant reviews, rights-secured Charles Bukowski poetry, and more—but no



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part seems rushed, too short, too long, crammed in, or just floating in space. It's scene positive of San Pedro, but it's not exclusive or blindered. That's a lot to accomplish in forty pages, but with a super-solid design, readable text, and a guiding invisible hand, every issue I've come across, I've read all the way through. That's the largest testament and recommendation I can give for any zine. Great stuff. —Todd (PO Box 1794, San Pedro, CA 90733)

RUM LAD #4, email for price, €1.50 + postage, 5½" x 8½", offset, 40 pgs. Many of you may know Steve Larder as an illustrator. He contributes frequently to *Razorcake*. Steve makes me glad that I'm not an illustrator much like Shark Pants make me glad I'm not a musician. I feel that I'm in the presence of a great power and no matter how hard I studied the craft, no matter how much heart I put into it, I'd never been an iota as good at illustrations as Steve Larder's effortless-looking, detailed illustrations. What makes *Rum Lad* even more endearing is that Steve comes across as an earnest DIY punk guy trying to find his way in life. His life is filled with trips, encounters, self-doubts, and the dealing with the death of loved ones—all approached candidly and honestly. If that doesn't endear you to *Rum Lad*, perhaps the fact that the entire zine is hand-written as well as hand-illustrated all the way

through, will give you that extra push. A labor of love through and through. And, as Steve mentions, "It's the little things, ya know?" —Todd (Steve Larder, Somerset House, Cherry Holt Lane, Sutterton, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 2HU, England, www.stevelarder.co.uk)

STANDARD ISSUE #5, \$?, 8½" x 11", copied, 24 pgs. Ottawa-oriented zine. If you're interested in what's going on in the Ottawa scene, this might be a good start, but I can't attest to what other starting points there may be. But all in all, I personally think this zine is pretty cheesy. There is a reasonably interesting little article on "Fire Brawlers" (cf. the firefighting scenes in *The Gangs of New York*), but it could have used much more detail and the closing line was a horrible non sequitur, which made me question why I bothered reading to that point. Also, I don't like articles on the "proper" way to mosh ("Mosh Right, Morons," pp. 3/22). First off, didn't everybody learn the "rules" to dancing like that years ago? (Yes, Ben Jensen, I call it dancing because that's what it is.) Is punk rock so new to Ottawa that they do, in fact, need such a primer? Second, who made Ben Jensen the Big Mosh Sheriff of the Ottawa house? Since when do we have to follow rules for punk dancing rather than merely consider "suggestions" that allow for a fun time to be had by all? I hereby encourage all of Ottawa to mosh

wrong on principle alone. —The Lord Kveldulfr (StandardIssueMag.com)

TNS RECORDS FREEFANZINE #4, free, 5" x 8¼", copied, 22 pgs. I had never heard of TNS Records before this zine, and you probably haven't heard of them either because they're pretty brand new (a year old). These guys put out ska and punk records in Manchester, and they fucking love their scene. There's little more encouraging than some honest-to-goddamn enthusiasm, and TNS has it in spades. Throughout the zine, you'll find indicators of this fact: the second piece is a semi-long rant on the damage that pay-to-play gigs inflict on a scene, they ask every band they interview about the state of the Manchester scene, and their record and show reviews are totally dripping with fandom and geekery of the finest and highest sort. Besides, aren't British punks inherently cooler? —Andrew Flanagan (thatsnotskanking@hotmail.com)

TRAINWRECK #5, \$1 or trade, 8½" x 5½", copied, 28 pgs. I'll admit it: When it comes to zines, it takes more to impress me now than it did when I was younger. I'm not as forgiving, especially in the realm of "personal" zines. It takes more to hold my interest. So, it's with a gusty sigh of relief when I declare that *Trainwreck* is... pretty fucking rad. Short, concise

snippets from Dave's trip abroad, peppered with anecdotes about Brooklyn. The writing's personable, welcoming, whip-smart and, dare I say, ranks up there with *Big Hands* as far as quality and consistency of voice goes. It's a quick twenty-eight pages, but you'll hear no complaint from me about any of 'em. Substantial and a damn nice read. —Keith Rosson (moshforjesus@gmail.com)

URINAL GUM #8, \$2, quarter-size, photocopied, 44 pgs. I don't really get this zine. It's a bunch of random stories that aren't interesting and never drew me in, even though I actually gave them a chance (which I'm surprised I did, as normally I don't have the patience). The tales include a trip to the roller derby, a homeless guy who gave the author \$100, a list of things that should go away forever, and so on. There was also one restaurant review, a book review, music review, and a film review. As Lauren Trout said in *Razorcake* #50 about *Urinal Gum*'s last issue, "I wouldn't have reviewed this zine if I didn't have to." Although her concern was giving the author negative attention that he was desperate for, my concern is just that it's boring and a waste of your time. —Kurt Morris (Urinal Gum, PO Box 1243, Eugene, OR 97440)

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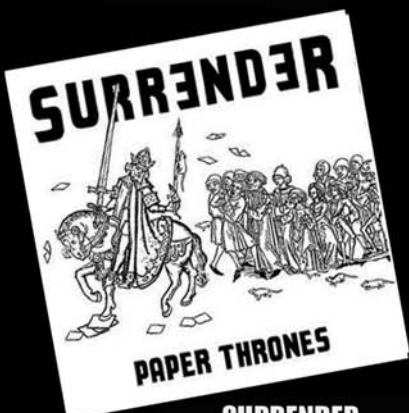
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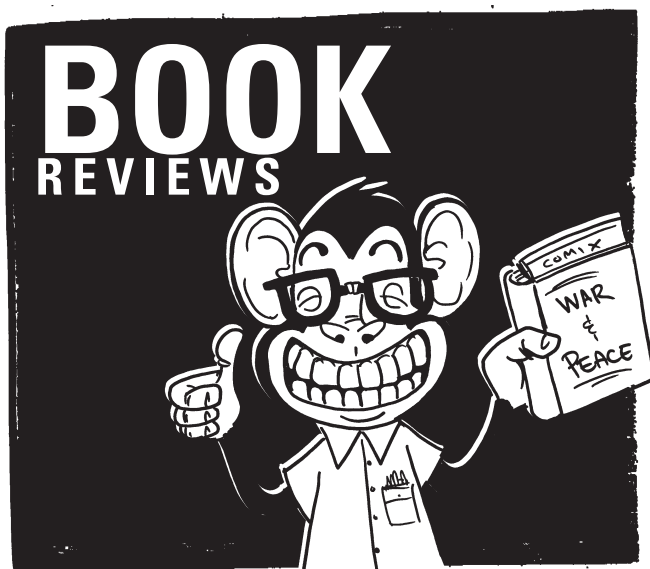
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Operation Patriotic Toilet Seat

By Titus North, 295 pgs.

Based on its premise, this is an incredibly bizarre—no, scratch that—this is an absurd book. However, the story line is cohesive within those absurd parameters. I must admit that I was somewhat intrigued and dedicated to finishing this even though the whole idea was ridiculous. The book starts in the early 1980s and our hero, Joe Retard (I'm assuming he's no relation to Jay Reatard) is trying to get out of trouble, so he joins the Navy and ends up in Japan. Through a series of adventures, he has become aware of a covert U.S. military action called "Operation Patriotic Toilet Seat." The military thinks that Joe has stolen the "Big Book of Butts" (I'm not making this up) and starts chasing after him. Thus, the majority of the book becomes the adventures of Joe Retard trying to escape from the U.S. military in Japan while teaming up with a cast of strange characters including a friend who can puke almost on command, a North Korean opera singer, and a guy who talks like a pirate. Joe eventually finds himself in South Korea, North Korea, and then back to Japan in 2004 (with a big gap between the early '80s and the latter date). The ending starts to get really heavy handed with

detail. It's generally a pretty fascinating read. There's everything from how to give false positives in drug tests (and what over the counter drugs to use) to what the most cost-effective bullets are to buy for your handgun, to how to encrypt written messages into images over the computer using stenography programs, to a listing of generic, fake Social Security numbers that can be used. It's the details that are the great parts about this book.

Some of the material comes across as pretty obvious (yeah, right, to avoid debt and live frugally, don't get yourself a credit card), but I guess it was just a question of Santiago getting through the obvious material in order to be able to delve into the minutiae: where to hide your stash, how to apply fake burns and scars to conceal your identity. Hell, the Self-Defense section has a subheading entirely devoted to Improvised Weapons, my favorites include a cat ("If it's not declawed, throw the cat in their face.") and a yo-yo ("Throw at their head, swing or hammer at vital areas with it.").

My biggest complaints are editorial ones. For one, it looks like the entire document was dumped straight from Word into whatever layout program the dude used. It's all in Times Roman, all in bold, all in the same font size. That may come across, at best, as me being a total design nerd and, at worst, an elitist, but the layout really could've used some jazz to make it more visually appealing and to delineate some of the information. More importantly, the author really should have had a friend edit this thing before he had it printed. Santiago is apparently terrified of commas. It's really not a huge deal, but it does get to the point where some of the linear qualities of the writing become totally muddled:

"The first type of guns I'm going to discuss are handguns that come in basically in two kinds revolvers and semi-automatics."

"Like I said before checks and credit cards should be avoided for maximum privacy however if you must use checks or credit cards follow these rules."

Again, it's not a huge deal, but when you couple that with these huge blocks of text, the readability does somewhat suffer. Still, when taken a whole, it's a fascinating piece of work and one that the author has obviously invested a ton of sweat and hours into. It is, like the title suggests, a *manual*—a little overwhelming when read straight through, but really captivating when perused leisurely, in small bits.

And as far as the content and overall scope of the book goes (and a selling point for any thirteen-year-olds out there), I'm pretty sure that *Shadowliving Tactical Manual* is destined, especially in this day and age, to raise a few eyebrows in an FBI office somewhere. Nice job. —Keith Rosson (No mailorder, but you can contact the author at: brimstone999@gmx or order the book at: lulu.com/content/2695362)

The Self-Defense section has a subheading entirely devoted to Improvised Weapons, my favorites include a cat and a yo-yo .

its description of U.S. torture and condemnation of their methods. That's not to say I'm in favor of torture. It just seemed a very obvious plot device. The main character delivering the torture had been a stupid creep from the start. The editorializing of both parties as to its need or lack thereof just seemed like sermonizing. Despite that bit of "okay, I get it—torture is horrible" part at the end of the book, the text here is amusing, fun, and reads pretty interestingly. An enjoyable read to pass the time. No more, no less. —Kurt Morris (Enlightened Pyramid Publications, 17 Ger Y Mynydd, Bangor, Wales LL57 1AG, United Kingdom)

Shadowliving Tactical Manual

By Daniel Santiago, 126 pages, \$11.95

I remember being absolutely fascinated with *The Anarchist's Cookbook* as a kid in junior high: "Dude, you can get high by smoking the scrapings from three hundred banana skins! We should totally try that!" Just walking around with that book—and I'll admit, my memory is spotty regarding any content besides questionably accurate drug and bomb-making recipes—I just felt a little more dangerous. Which is a pretty rad thing for a thirteen year-old to feel. The truth was, I was a non-threatening nerd of monstrous proportions, but in 7th grade, you'll take what you can get.

Consider, then, *Shadowliving Tactical Manual* to be *The Anarchist's Cookbook* for grownups. Like the title suggests, it contains step-by-step instructions and how-to suggestions on just how one goes about living under the radar, in all manners and forms. It's divided into sections (Wilderness Survival, Self-Defense, Privacy, and Frugal Living) and each section has a ton of subsections, the majority of them going into great

Zen Wrapped in Karma Dipped in Chocolate

By Brad Warner, 227 pgs.

It doesn't seem like all that long ago—I used to think of Brad Warner as the Carry Nation of Soto Zen. Carry Nation, of course, was probably the most notorious Temperance crusader of the late-1800s/early-1900s and she is the grim Fairy Godmother of all solemn Straight Edgers everywhere. Dressed dourly in all black and looming taller than most men, she was a frumpy Lurch of a woman with a piousness like pine tar. And her God had propelled her—on zealot's wings, buoyed on the heaving winds of her own righteous indignation—to burst into saloons with a Bible in one hand and a hatchet in the other and proceed to smash the place to bits. That little Holy Temper Tantrum was supposed to steer drunkards away from a life of dancing with John Barleycorn and towards a sober life amongst the Lord's flock. I doubt that it ever worked on anyone except possibly her own poor, cringing husband. Anyway, I used to think of Brad Warner much the same way. Dressed in a black biker jacket and a black Misfits T-shirt, Warner clutched Zen Master Dogen's *Shobogenzo* as his bible. And armed with that chippy, hatchet-like punk attitude of his, he would ruthlessly hack to bits whatever he saw as lying outside the purview of his branch of the Soto sect of Zen. That, more often than not, meant that he targeted Buddhists who did not fetishize zazen (sitting meditation) like his sect did. Fortunately for his readers though, he'd usually do it in a way that was way funnier and more clever than some frigid She-Brute gone apeshit and smashing a barroom to Kingdom Come—though that's pretty damn funny, too.

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Part smartass hardcore punk rocker, part devout Zen priest, Warner was (and is) something of a chimera in the marketplace of spirituality. If you were able to get past the barbs of his punkish impudence—which many among the more stuffy contingents of mainstream Buddhism were not able to do—you found not some half-crazed adept of Crazy Wisdom, but a straight-laced, somewhat conservative, almost prudish disciple of Dogen. Instead of the Lee Ving you were expecting from all the “crass immaturity and obnoxious heaps of puerility”—as one of Warner’s critics labeled his work—you found an Ian MacKaye. In other words, lo and behold, there turned out to be a monk underneath that prickly punk outer shell. And that monkish side of Warner showed up on my radar as being relatively ascetic, somewhat asexual, and plugged up with a pine tar-like piousness.

But since we last strolled through the Zen thoughts of Brad Warner via his second book *Sit Down and Shut Up*, something seems to have shifted. Warner, it seems, has undergone something of an Extreme Zen Makeover. He is now a regular contributor of hip and irreverent Zen columns to the flesh store known as SuicideGirls.com, a soft smut website where you can pay to see delicious tattooed punk/goth girls provocatively posed in various stages of undress. Judging by photos and stories posted on his blog, many of those same delectably salacious Suicide Gals Warner now counts among his students—and regular party pals. And the one-time “Carry Nation of Soto Zen” now proudly calls himself the “Porno Buddhist.”

Dogen must be spinning in his stupa right about now.

As it turns out, I might be partially to blame for this inexplicable loosening of Brad Warner’s Zen girdle. Several years back, not long after his first book *Hardcore Zen* came out, I interviewed Warner for *Razorcake* (#34) and was astounded to find out that he had no idea who Ikkyu was. Ikkyu Sojun, for those who don’t collect Zen Master trading cards, was a brash and iconoclastic Rinzai Zen Master from medieval Japan who had enormous appetites for sake and sex. These appetites he made no attempt to hide, even though he was a respected spiritual teacher, and, in fact, he celebrated them openly. His general attitude towards life—and Zen in particular—was summed up in his comment, “Those who keep the rules are asses, those who break the rules are men.” And when he wasn’t drunkenly stumbling around brothels, he was composing scandalously bawdy poetry about the joys and triumphs of his “jade stalk,” a.k.a.: his boner. In other words, Ikkyu was the original Porno Buddhist. (Or would that title rightfully go to the Tibetan “madman” Drukpa Kunley? I guess I’ll have to look that one up....)

Anyway, I can’t help but wonder if I somehow unwittingly tripped up the prim and proper Mr. Warner and caused him to do a pratfall right into the monstrous theological cow pie of antinomianism. Maybe my question about Ikkyu stuck in Warner’s head and rattled around in there over time, eventually bringing him to read up on the legendary Zen heretic, which, in turn, somehow brought about his degeneration into the Seymore Butts of Buddhism we have today. Or maybe his Extreme Zen Makeover was inspired by his publisher’s desire to goose sales of his next book. One can only guess.

Regardless of who or what triggered Warner’s apparent transformation from fussbudget to libertine, the new image is in place

and the new book is out. And, as it turns out, there’s a whole shit-storm of things that could’ve caused a shift in Warner’s personality. Maybe my Ikkyu question wasn’t so transformative after all. *Zen Wrapped in Karma Dipped in Chocolate*, details the jarring events—Mom and Grandma dying, losing his dream job, etc.—that rocked the foundation of Warner’s life starting in 2007. And if sudden unemployment and deaths in the family wasn’t enough, there was the stress, frustration, and emotional drain of a marriage drying up and falling apart, complete with the murky maneuverings of extramarital sleeping-around that typically takes place as a marriage stiffens into rigor mortis.

Any way you cut it, it was a rough stretch of road, even for a Zen Master. And it left Warner proclaiming in the book that he would be an asshole for the rest of his life. He writes, “What I mean by that is that I just don’t give a shit anymore. I’m gonna pretty much say and do whatever I want from now on. This book is a manifestation of that attitude.”

Of Brad Warner’s three books, this is the one that carries the heaviest autobiographical weight, the most human dram—and the least amount of philosophical ruminating. And while Zen-ophiles anxious to gobble up pearly strings of subtle Buddhist wisdom might find the book intellectually light, *Zen Wrapped in Karma Dipped in Chocolate* might just be the Warner book that stands the best chance of sucking in non-Buddhist minds and giving them something more substantial to chew on than the typical tapioca new age spirituality they might find on *Oprah*. And that’s of some value in itself.

Yeah, Warner still comes across as a bit of a stubborn sectarian and a hired goon for Dogen. There’s still plenty of that pine tar piousness in his veins. But I liked the “punk monk” Warner and I like the “Porno Buddhist” Warner, too, even though I still don’t agree with everything he says. Maybe the stuff that comes across as dogmatic or inflexible—or even sectarian—is really just his “upaya,” or skillfully sly teaching technique. Those Zen Masters are tricky and they know more than one way to get you to skin your own cat. One thing’s for certain, the Punk-Porno Buddhist is still a breath of fresh air in a domain choked with facades and affectations and mindless mimicry. Just like punk itself is still a breath of fresh air compared to all the soulless corporatized “commodifying of dissent” that goes on out there. And you gotta give Warner credit, he didn’t give himself some exotic Sanskrit “holy” name, he doesn’t own a fleet of Rolls Royces given to him by disciples, and he doesn’t decorate his book covers with soft focus photos of lotuses or moonlit skies or leaves floating on water. Like the famous Indian sage Nisargadatta Maharaj, Warner seems to truly understand that what we typically think of as “spirituality” is “as discardable as dishwater.”

Brad Warner may well be destined to join the rogues gallery of Buddhist Outlaws like Chogyam Trungpa and Alan Watts; unconventional teachers of the Dharma—underappreciated and marginalized by the mainstream Buddhist establishment as “wayward spirits”—and that’s probably just as well, as far as I’m concerned. As Bukowski might say, I’d rather run with the hunted. —Aphid Peewit (New World Library, 14 Pamaron Way, Novato, CA 94949, www.newworldlibrary.com)



DVD REVIEWS



Iggy Pop: Lust for Life: DVD

Lust for Life (1986) is a forty-one-minute Iggy Pop/Stooges documentary, originally created for West German Television. The film was put into production to maximize the commercial success of Pop’s *Blah Blah Blah* record. *Lust for Life* haphazardly recounts Iggy’s life—from his Ann Arbor beginnings to his mid-’80s solo career. What’s interesting about *Lust for Life* is the film’s composition and the way it inadvertently captures the zeitgeist of the mid-’80s.

In terms of composition, it’s clear that the director of *Lust for Life* had a greater interest in the Stooges than Iggy’s solo career (approximately half of the DVD’s screen time is devoted to interviews with Iggy Pop and Ron Asheton discussing their old band). *Blah Blah Blah* simply serves as the pretext this German crew needed to document the Stooges and Pop’s teenage years. And that’s understandable: Iggy’s early-to-mid-’80s output was generally lackluster. Nevertheless, Iggy’s first two albums—(ironically) *Lust for Life* and *The Idiot*—are glossed over, which is a shame, as they rank right up there with the Stooges’ self-titled debut and *Fun House*.

Lust for Life does an excellent job in capturing the puritanical ethos and socioeconomics of the 1980s. Iggy comes off as incredibly business-minded—almost completely divorced from his iconoclastic Stooges persona. (Pop claims he now has two personalities—the “kid” Iggy and the “serious”

Iggy.) Pop is incredibly fit; he's off of drugs and totally uninterested in anyone but himself—breaking mid-sentence in the film to ask an underling for a cup of coffee. Iggy is Ronald Reagan's rugged individual in punk form. Like globalization (which spread precipitously in the 1980s), Pop is everywhere in this documentary; he has no home. Compare this to Ron Asheton, who is interviewed in his mother's basement in Ann Arbor, recounting the Stooges' early days in the very room the band used to rehearse in. Ron states that he hasn't seen Iggy in years because Iggy has no reason to visit Ann

U.P.S.: UPS Box: DVD/CD

By the time I got to Tucson in 1988, UPS stickers were all over town. Close to the shipping company's logo, it had something off, something viral about it that told you it had to be a band. Some people talked about big shows they had in the glory days. Usual talk. That's one of the great things about punk rock, in the do-it-yourself realm—every town can have their own golden era. With pissed-off youth in every neighborhood, your town probably had rad bands in the '80s screaming about what we all felt pent up about. UPS

That's one of the great things about punk rock, in the do-it-yourself realm—every town can have their own golden era.

Arbor anymore. Like blue-collar labor, Ron is archaic; incompatible with deindustrialization (Iggy Pop), Asheton's left on the sidelines, overweight and doing fuck knows what near the epicenter of America's dying auto industry. Iggy Pop drinks Perrier in this film; Asheton downs American ale.

Lust for Life is valuable in that it does an excellent job of capturing where Iggy Pop and Ron Asheton were in the mid-'80s. In terms of an informative documentary, it completely fails. No mention is made of Scott Asheton or the late Dave Alexander (the unsung hero of the Stooges). With the exception of the documentary's title, Iggy's seminal late-'70s work is never referenced. For all intents and purposes, *Lust for Life* is a glorified promo package for Iggy Pop, who comes off as something of a douchebag. If you're looking for a hero in this documentary, it's Ron Asheton—who seems to represent more of the imagined ideals of the Stooges. Asheton actually seems interested in answering the interviewer's questions, while Iggy just goes on narcissistic autopilot.

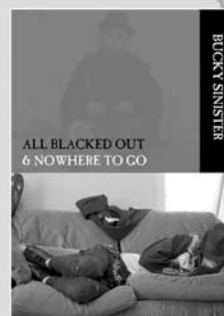
For Iggy Pop and Stooges fans, *Lust for Life* is worth about ten bucks. For casual fans, this documentary isn't worth the price of admission. For the second group, I recommend checking out a biography on Iggy from your local library or trading in your *Best of Iggy Pop* CD for *Fun House* on vinyl. —Ryan Leach (ABC Entertainment)

was Tucson's at that time. This 25th anniversary DVD documents a couple of great shows. Their sound was solid '80s fast punk, making a living under thirty seconds, growing from Tesco Vee-ish snotty punk to more harsh speedy hardcore, always extremely catchy. Half the band looked like they belonged in GBH (mohawks and studded leather), the other half straight outta D.I. skate rock, and a metalhead guitarist (long hair, no shirt), summed it up—misfits coming together. Awesome. One show is in the University of Arizona's "Cellar" in the student union, a basic stage and room that was more for stand-up comedy troupes with its brick wall. The next day the school newspaper cried riot with furniture being pushed outta the way for mosh pits (a better term then). The footage looks like VHS, making it even more lurid fun to watch. The other show on the DVD is of a downtown, outside freaks show, with the public pretending it was Halloween, basically. The footage is in better shape and from a public access crew. The package includes some booklets and a great CD with eighty-five songs! Music from five CDs, some unreleased. Punk's not dead. —Speedway Randy (Disillusion Music, www.uselesspiecesofshit.com)

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